

On Top Of The News Email: news@arubatoday.com Website: www.arubatoday.com Tel: 582-7800 Saturday, December 11, 2010

Clinton has Obama's back



U.S. President Barack Obama (L) looks on as former President Bill Clinton gestures while speaking to the press in the Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House in Washington, December 10, 2010. Clinton endorsed Obama's deal with Republicans to extend Bush-era tax cuts after the two men met at the White House on Friday.

WASHINGTON – Bill Clinton implored Democrats to back the tax-cut deal that President Barack Obama negotiated with Republicans as the former president made a surprise appearance at Obama's side in the White House briefing room Friday.

"I don't believe there is a better deal out there," Clinton told reporters who'd been summoned at a moment's notice to see the former chief executive back the current one. Clinton and Obama had just finished a private meeting in the Oval Office. Obama said it was a "terrific meeting" and then turned the podium over to Clinton.

The voluble former president took it away, and Obama left part-way through his remarks, saying he had holiday parties to attend.

"Both sides are going to have to eat some things they don't like," Clinton told reporters. "We don't want to slip back into a recession. We've got to keep this thing going and accelerate its pace. I think this is the best available option."

The pact would extend cuts in income tax rates for all earners that would otherwise expire next month, renew long-term jobless benefits and trim Social Security taxes for one year. A number of liberal Democrats say it gives away too much to Republicans, and a provision that's particularly irksome to Democrats cuts estate taxes for the wealthiest Americans. Nonetheless the measure appears headed for Senate approval after negotiators added a few relatively modest sweeteners to promote ethanol and other forms of alternative energy. It's unclear whether House Democrats, who are most opposed, will be able to demand changes that go much further.

Clinton gave the package his full-throated endorsement, even while noting that he opposes the extension of upper-income tax cuts — though he himself will benefit from it.

"I personally believe this is a good deal and the best he could have gotten under the circumstances," Clinton said, urging fellow Democrats to support it. "If I was in office now, I would have done what the president has done," he said. □

SMART CHOICE

Kidnapper found guilty



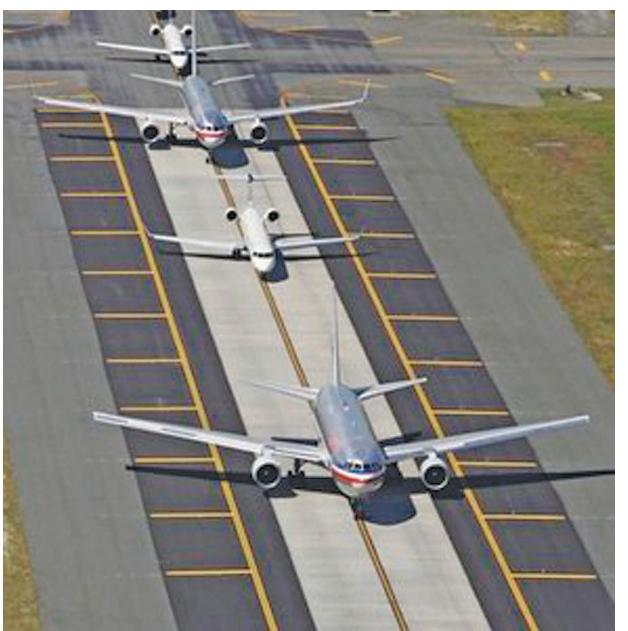
Elizabeth Smart addresses the media outside the federal court house following the guilty verdict in the Brian David Mitchell trial Friday, Dec. 10, 2010, in Salt Lake City. Mitchell was found guilty for the June 5, 2002 kidnapping of Elizabeth Smart.

(AP Photo/Colin E. Braley)
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Jailed Chinesed dissident honored at Nobel ceremony

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FAA loses track of 119,000 aircraft



By CHRIS HAWLEY

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The Federal Aviation Administration is missing key information on who owns one-third of the 357,000 private and commercial aircraft in the U.S. — a gap the agency fears could be exploited by terrorists and drug traffickers.

The records are in such disarray that the FAA says it is worried that criminals could buy planes without the government's knowledge, or use the registration numbers of other aircraft to evade new computer systems designed to track suspicious flights. It has

ordered all aircraft owners to re-register their planes in an effort to clean up its files.

About 119,000 of the aircraft on the U.S. registry have "questionable registration" because of missing forms, invalid addresses, unreported sales or other paperwork problems, according to the FAA. In many cases, the FAA cannot say who owns a plane or even whether it is still flying or has been junked.

Already there have been cases of drug traffickers using phony U.S. registration numbers, as well as instances of mistaken identity in which police raided the wrong plane because of faulty record-keeping. Next year, the FAA will begin canceling the registration certificates of all 357,000 aircraft and require owners to register anew, a move that is causing grumbling among airlines, banks and leasing companies. Notices went out to the first batch of aircraft owners last month.

"We have identified some potential risk areas, but I think we're trying to eliminate as much risk as possible through the re-registration process," said FAA spokeswoman Laura Brown.

The FAA says security isn't the only reason it needs an up-to-date registry. Regulators use it to contact owners about safety problems, states rely on it to charge sales tax and some airports employ it to bill for landing fees. Also, rescuers use the database to track down planes that are missing.

But the FAA has emphasized the security and law enforcement angle as the new measure has moved

through the rule-making process over the past two years. The agency says the paperwork gap is becoming a bigger problem as authorities increasingly rely on computers to tighten aviation security in the wake of 9/11 and other terrorist plots.

There have already been cases of criminals using U.S. registration numbers, also known as N-numbers or tail numbers, to disguise their airplanes. In 2008, Venezuela authorities seized a twin-engine plane with the registration number N395CA on the fuselage and more than 1,500 pounds of cocaine on board.

Soon afterward, airplane owner Steven Lathrop of Ellensburg, Wash., received a call from a reporter. "He sort of started the conversation with, 'Do you know where your airplane is? ... Your airplane's in a jungle in South America,'" Lathrop said.

Lathrop's Piper Cheyenne II XL was locked safely in its hangar at the Ellensburg airport. The smugglers had apparently chosen his tail number because the model was similar to their plane.

"Anybody with a roll of duct tape can put any number they want on an airplane," Lathrop said.

Federal law requires all U.S. aircraft owners to register their planes with the FAA and carry the registration certificate on board. The registration number — all U.S. registrations start with the letter N — is painted on the fuselage or tail. The numbers are used on flight plan forms and by air traffic controllers to communicate with aircraft in flight. □



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Elizabeth Smart addresses the media outside the federal court house following the guilty verdict in the Brian David Mitchell trial Friday, Dec. 10 2010 in Salt Lake City. Mitchell was found guilty for the June 5, 2002 kidnapping of Elizabeth Smart.

(AP Photo/Colin E Braley)

By JENNIFER DOBNER
Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — Elizabeth Smart waited more than eight years for the word she heard Friday. "Guilty," after a federal jury deliberated five hours to convict street preacher Brian David Mitchell of snatching Smart from her bed, at knifepoint in the dead of night, and repeatedly raping her while he held her captive for nine months.

Smart smiled as the verdict was read, while a bedraggled, bearded Mitchell sat at the defense table, singing hymns with his hands before his chest, as if in prayer.

"I hope that not only is this an example that justice can be served in America, but that it is possible to move on after something terrible has happened," Smart said, after she walked arm-in-arm with her mother through a crush of media. It was a dramatic end to a tale that captured the nation's attention since she disappeared in June

2002: A 14-year-old girl mysteriously taken from her home, the intense search and her eventual discovery walking Salt Lake City's streets with her captors.

Smart, now 23, flew back from her Mormon mission in Paris to take the stand, and recount her "nine months of hell."

"The beginning and the end of this story is attributable to a woman with extraordinary courage and extraordinary determination, and that's Elizabeth Smart," federal prosecutor Carlie Christensen said outside the courthouse.

"She did it with candor and clarity and a truthfulness that I think moved all of us," she said.

Smart described in excruciating detail how she woke up one night to the feel of a cold, jagged knife at her throat and being whisked away by Mitchell to his camp in the foothills near the family's Salt Lake City home.

Within hours of the kidnapping, she testified, she was forced into a

polygamous marriage with him. She was tethered to a metal cable and subjected to near-daily rapes while being forced to use alcohol and drugs.

The five-week trial turned on the question of Mitchell's mental health. The thinly built, gray-haired Mitchell was routinely removed from the courtroom after loudly singing hymns and Christmas carols and taken to another room to watch the proceedings on closed circuit TV.

He kept his eyes closed in court and never spoke to anyone, including his lawyers.

His lawyers did not dispute that he kidnapped Smart but wanted him to be found not guilty by reason of insanity. Such a verdict would have sent him to a prison mental hospital.

Prosecutors countered that Mitchell was faking mental illness to avoid a conviction, labeling him a "predatory chameleon."

Smart testified she believed Mitchell was driven by his

Guilty verdict brings Smart closure

desire for sex, drugs and alcohol, not by any sincere religious beliefs.

Jurors did not buy the insanity defense, deliberating for roughly five hours to find him guilty of kidnapping and unlawful transportation of a minor across state lines for the purposes of sex.

As the verdicts were read, the shackled Mitchell sat singing about Jesus Christ on the cross. Smart then turned to her mother and both smiled. Elizabeth Smart later hugged prosecutors.

"It's real!" father Ed Smart said on his way out of the packed courtroom, giving a thumbs up.

Smart and her family had hoped for the guilty verdict and a long sentence.

Mitchell could face up to life in prison when he is sentenced on May 25. However, a judge also could impose an unspecified, lesser sentence, prosecutors said.

To the chagrin of the family, the case was delayed for years after Mitchell was declared mentally incompetent to stand trial in state court and a judge refused to order involuntary medications.

Federal prosecutors later stepped in and took the case

to trial. Christensen, the U.S. attorney, said one of the biggest challenges of the case was the six years between the time of the kidnapping and the time the case came into the federal justice system.

A parade of experts took the witness stand to say Mitchell had an array of diagnoses, from a rare delusional disorder and schizophrenia to pedophilia, anti-social personality disorder and narcissism. Mitchell's former stepdaughter told reporters that she was shocked that jurors didn't see that he was mentally ill.

"He honestly believes God tells him to do these things," Rebecca Woodridge said. "He's upset and frustrated that the Lord is making him go through this." For the Smart family, the case was the end of an ordeal. Elizabeth Smart said she plans to return to Paris.

Asked to describe the family's emotions, her mother Lois said one word came to mind: Victorious. It was the same word her daughter used on the day she returned from captivity. "I think this is an exceptionally victorious day," Lois Smart said. □

U.S. BRIEFS

Mich. Burger King customer's death ruled homicide

DETROIT — The death of a 67-year-old Burger King customer who police said fell and later died after being punched by a 20-year-old employee was ruled a homicide on Friday. An autopsy determined that Paul Cannon died from blunt force trauma to the head, said Dennis Niemiec, a spokesman for the Wayne County medical examiner's office. An earlier report suggested the punch may have caused Cannon to choke on his dentures, but Niemiec said the dentures played no role in the death.

The employee was being held Friday and could face criminal charges. Once the investigation is complete, the details will be submitted to the county prosecutor's office for review, likely over the weekend, said police Sgt. Eren Stephens.

Police said Cannon was reportedly causing a disturbance Thursday afternoon at the restaurant on the city's east side and tried to hit the worker, who swung back. Police believe he was homeless, Stephens said. □

Fla. man cyber stalked sorority pledges

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — A Florida man accused of using Facebook to harass Louisiana State University sorority pledges and pressure them into sending him nude pictures over the Internet also is a suspect in other states, authorities said Friday. LSU campus police officers and Florida Department of Law Enforcement agents on Thursday arrested 27-year-old Mitchell Hill at a home in Key West, where he works as a chef at a Cuban restaurant. He's facing only Louisiana charges so far, but FDLE spokesman Keith Kameg said Hill is suspected in cyber stalking investigations by police at the University of Florida, Florida State University and possibly other Florida schools.

Similar cases also have been reported at Auburn University, the University of Alabama and University of Tennessee, but investigators said there probably are others.

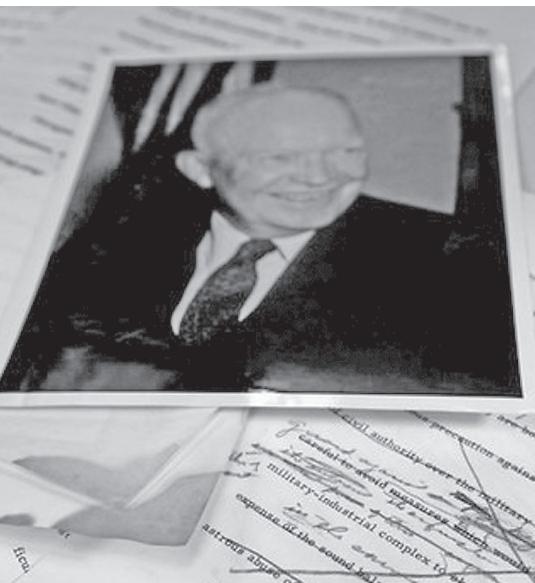
"It's really a huge sense of relief" knowing there has been an arrest, said 18-year-old Florida State student Ashley Atchison, who temporarily left school because she was so traumatized. Hill, who moved to Florida from Cincinnati within the past two years, was being held without bond in the Monroe County Jail after he refused to waive extradition during a court appearance Friday in Key West. He is charged with two counts of extortion, two counts of video voyeurism and 12 counts of attempted video voyeurism. □

Bug man accused of stealing from clients since '83

DENVER — A southwestern Colorado exterminator is suspected of earning the trust of his customers — and their dogs — to steal hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of items and cash over the course of nearly 30 years. Charles Trogdon was arrested Nov. 1, days after one of his customers, who was hiding, said she saw Trogdon open a nightstand where money previously had been stolen. La Plata County sheriff's investigator Dan Patterson said other customers began calling and wondering if Trogdon was responsible for missing cash and items over the years — everything from tools and jewelry to a custom-made rifle. Patterson said many of Trogdon's customers gave him their security codes or keys; a bag of 50 keys was found in his truck along with a box of dog bones. Authorities believe Trogdon returned to customers' homes after spraying for bugs to take an item or, in the case of cash, partial amounts of what he found. "Never too much at a time though, just enough to keep people confused," Patterson said.

Some alleged victims were snowbirds who allowed Trogdon to spray their homes while they were in Arizona for the winter. Some people thought they had just lost an item in their moves, while others suspected that a neighbor's child was stealing from them, Patterson said. One man only just realized his rifle was missing after news of Trogdon's arrest spread. □

Papers shed light on Eisenhower's farewell address



By JOHN MILBURN

Associated Press

ABILENE, Kan. — For nearly two years, President Dwight D. Eisenhower and his aides searched for the right words to describe at the end of his presidency his fear that the nation's burgeoning military power was driving its foreign policy, newly released papers show.

Many months before delivering the farewell address in which he famously warned about the strength of the American "military-industrial" complex, Eisenhower weighed various ideas for the speech, but concerns about the military were always central to his remarks.

The Eisenhower Presidential Library on Friday unveiled previously unseen drafts of the speech that were found recently in a cabin owned by Eisenhower speechwriter Malcolm Moos.

The documents help explain the origins of the term "military-industrial complex," which Eisenhower used to warn against unbridled military development.

The term was thought to have started as "war-based" industrial complex before becoming "military" in later drafts.

But that theory was based on an oral history from Ralph Williams, one of Eisenhower's aides. In the new collection, "military" appears in the passage from the first draft.

"What we know now is that 'military-industrial complex' was in there all along," said Valoise Armstrong, the archivist who processed the new papers.

In one draft, the paragraph mentioning the military-industrial complex is riddled with pencil marks deleting whole sentences, but the term itself is unblemished.

Moos' son, Grant, found the papers — covered with pinecones, dirt and other debris — in a cabin in Minnesota earlier this year. He turned them over to the library in October.

"We are just so fortunate that these papers were discovered," said Karl Weissenbach, director of the library in Abilene. "We were finally able to fill in the gaps of the address. For a number of years, it was apparent that there were gaps."

The papers show that Eisenhower and his staff spent two years preparing for his final speech to the nation. One document features a typewritten note from the president lamenting that when he joined the military in 1911, there were 84,000 Army soldiers — a number that ballooned roughly tenfold by 1960.

"The direct result of this continued high level

of defense expenditures has been to create a permanent armaments industry of vast proportions, where none had existed before," he wrote in the passage, a variation of which reached the delivered speech on Jan. 17, 1961.

The notion of a farewell address began with a list of potential topics Eisenhower could discuss from May 1959 through the end of his second term.

The drafts show that the speech started as a reflection on public service and the role of the military, but expanded into wide-ranging remarks about the technological revolution and his lament that he never achieved world peace, but avoided a nuclear war. Eisenhower biographer David Nichols noted that while the address is known for the reference to the military-industrial complex, the president had warned about military growth and Cold War threats throughout his presidency.

"He was always talking about the Cold War and the threat to American values and the danger that America would become a garrison state," Nichols said. "The military wanted a lot more than he was willing to give them. It frustrated the Army. He thought about it all the time."

The papers include 21 drafts of the speech, showing the evolution of the final presentation, which was originally intended to be given before Congress but was eventually delivered from the Oval Office.

Nichols, who is working on a book about Eisenhower and the Suez Canal Crisis, said historians often overlook the president's speeches because of his weak skills as an orator. But, he said, Eisenhower was heavily involved in his public addresses, often rewriting them himself until moments before delivery.

The presidents' brother, Milton Eisenhower, and Moos' staff helped him develop his farewell speech.

Milton Eisenhower's notations are found throughout the rough drafts, including wholesale changes on one draft prepared just 10 days before the president spoke on television. Weissenbach said Milton Eisenhower was part of the president's inner circle, along with the president's son John.

"That to me illustrates how Milton had a take-charge moment where he wasn't pleased with the direction it was taking and made an overhaul. Obviously he wouldn't have done it without the blessing of his brother," Weissenbach said.

Nichols said Milton Eisenhower had a special relationship with his brother throughout his presidency. However, he said, little exists in the public record of his involvement, outside a few memos in the archives.

"Eisenhower kept marvelous records on what he did, in the Oval Office, the hospital, but his conversations with Milton were off the record," Nichols said. "I only wish and pray that we could uncover some notes." □

Custer's 'Last Flag' sold for \$2.2 million

By MATTHEW BROWN

Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. — The only U.S. flag not captured or lost during George Armstrong Custer's Last Stand at the Battle of Little Bighorn in southeastern Montana sold at auction Friday for \$2.2 million. The buyer was identified by the New York auction house Sotheby's as an American private collector. Frayed, torn, and with possible bloodstains, the flag had been valued before its sale at up to \$5 million.

The 7th U.S. Cavalry flag — known as a "guidon" for its swallow-tailed shape — had been the property of the Detroit Institute of Arts, which paid just \$54 for it in 1895.

"We'll be using the proceeds to strengthen our collection of Native American art, which has a rather nice irony to it I think," said the Detroit museum's director, Graham Beal.

Custer and more than 200 troopers were massacred by Lakota Sioux and Northern Cheyenne warriors in the infamous 1876 battle. Of the five guidons carried by Custer's battalion only one was immediately recovered, from beneath the body of a fallen trooper.

And while Custer's reputation has risen and fallen over the years — once considered a hero, he's regarded by some contemporary scholars as an inept leader and savage American Indian killer — the guidon has emerged as the stuff of legend.

The other flags were believed

captured by the victorious Indians.

The recovered flag later became known as the Culbertson Guidon, after the member of the burial party who recovered it, Sgt. Ferdinand Culbertson. Made of silk, it measures 33 inches by 27 inches, and features 34 gold stars.

"It's more than just a museum object or textile. It's a piece of Americana," said John Doerner, Chief Historian at the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument in southeastern Montana.

For most of the last century the flag was hidden from public view, kept in storage first at the museum and later, after a period on display in Montana, in a National Park Service facility in Harpers Ferry, W.V., according to Beal, the museum director.

Dating to an era when the museum took in a variety of natural history and historical items, the guidon was sold because it did not fit with the museum's focus on art, Beal said. "The irony is you get all these people phoning the museum upset we're selling the flag, and no one knew we owned it," he said.

He added that he was "very pleased" with Friday's sale price: "We had a couple of people comment to us that we would be lucky to get a million for it."

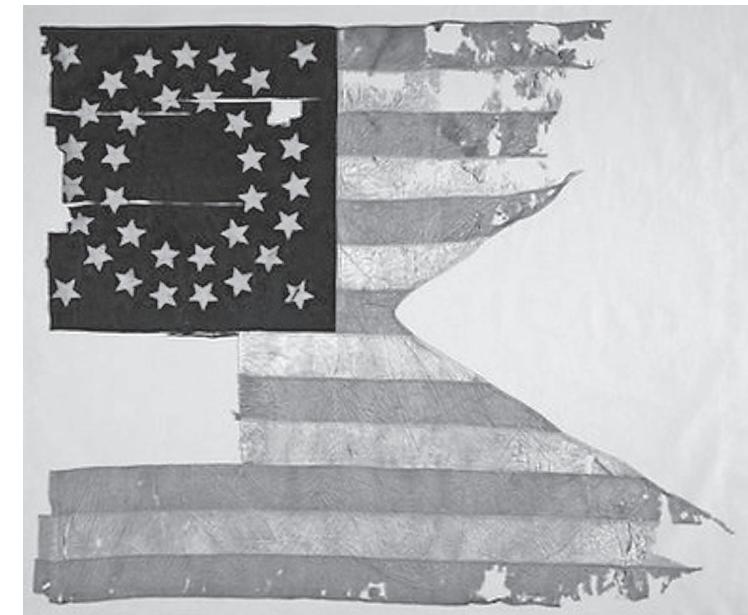
A second 7th Cavalry guidon was recovered in September 1876, at the Battle of Slim Buttes near present-day Reva, S.D.

Now in possession of the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, that flag was poorly cared for and is now in horrible condition — "almost dust," according to the monument's chief of interpretation, Ken Woody.

As for Culbertson's Guidon — or Custer's Last Flag, as Sotheby's has billed it — Woody pointed out that without the Custer mystique, it would be just another piece of old cloth.

"Some people like memorabilia and Americana, and they all want to own a little piece of it," Woody said.

Sealed in a custom-made plexiglass case by the Detroit museum since its return from the Park Service in 1982, the flag has several holes and the red of some its stripes has run into the white stripes. Its once-



sharp swallow tail tips are now tattered and torn.

Culbertson's Guidon also is missing a star and a section of striping about 9 inches wide and 6 inches high — apparently cut away as a souvenir before

its acquisition by the museum. Yet on the auction block, even what's missing is worth a story. "I'm sure Culbertson let other men take small snippets for themselves," Sotheby's vice chairman David Redden said. □

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Leak puts informants in jeopardy

DENVER — A Colorado sheriff's online database mistakenly revealed the identities of confidential drug informants and listed phone numbers, addresses and Social Security numbers of suspects, victims and others interviewed during criminal investigations, authorities said.

The breach potentially affects some 200,000 people, and Mesa County sheriff's deputies have been sifting through the database to determine who, if anyone, is in jeopardy.

"That in itself is probably the biggest concern we have, because we're talking about people's personal safety," Sheriff Stan Hilkey said.

The FBI and Google Inc. are trying to determine who accessed the database, the sheriff said. Their concern: That someone may have copied it and could post it, WikiLeaks-style, on the Internet.

"The truth is, once it's been out there and on the Internet and copied, you're never going to regain total control," Hilkey said.

Thousands of pages of confidential information were vulnerable from April until Nov. 24, when someone notified authorities after finding their name on the Internet. Officials said the database was accessed from within the United States, as well as outside the country, before it was removed from the server.

The information was so stunning that Jay Seaton, publisher of the Grand Junction Daily Sentinel, thought it was obtained illegally.

A source provided the western Colorado newspaper with a computer disk shortly after Thanksgiving. The paper first published details of the leak — but not its contents.

"We got that disk returned to the proper authorities," he said. "As a general rule, I don't mind taking some risks. But in something like this, where you can actually get people killed, I'm out."

The disk's contents were legally gleaned from a sheriff's department database. In

April, a Mesa County information technology employee moved the database into what the employee believed was a secure server, county spokeswoman Jessica Peterson said.

The information sat there as a large text file. It was first accessed by an outside computer on Oct. 30. Other computers accessed the information over the next 25 days.

Hilkey declined to provide other details. But he surmised that a Google Web crawler that can be programmed to troll the Internet for specific sets of information, such as nine-digit numbers that can be Social Security numbers, found the server.

"Somebody who sets up that kind of Web crawler to search for that kind of information probably doesn't have good intentions," the sheriff said.

The employee who transferred the files no longer works for the county. Peterson declined to say whether the file transfer led to the employee's departure. A Google spokesperson didn't immediately return calls for comment. Deputies have used the database since 1989 to collect and share intelligence gathered during the course of police work. It contains 200,000 names — Mesa County's population is about 150,000 — and includes investigative files from a local drug task force.

The information included data about Mesa County employees, information from the nearby Fruita and Palisade police departments — and possibly information from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and Grand Junction police.

DEA spokesman Mike Turner and Grand Junction police spokeswoman Kate Porras insisted their agencies' information wasn't compromised because they use their own computer systems. But both agencies work with the Mesa County sheriff's drug task force, whose files were in the database. □

CA crews try to reach smoldering homes after blast

SAN BRUNO, Calif. — Fire crews tried to douse the remnants of an enormous blaze and account for the residents of dozens of homes Friday after a gas line ruptured and an explosion ripped through in a neighborhood near San Francisco, killing at least four people and likely more.

Television footage showed crews with dogs going house to house in the neighborhood Friday morning, and officials said there could be more casualties. Earlier Friday, officials said at least six people were killed before revising the official number to four.

At least 50 people were hurt, with three suffering critical burns in the explosion Thursday evening that left a giant crater and sent flames tearing through the middle-class neighborhood of 1960s-era homes in hills overlooking San Francisco, the bay and the airport.

Christina Veraflor, 41, of Napa, grew up in the neighborhood and said Friday morning that her 67-year-old mother's house was destroyed. Her mother, who had lived in the home for 40 years, was at the movies when the neighborhood erupted in flames.

"I woke up this morning and said, 'I'll go to my mom's and get this and get that.' But there is no mom's anymore," Veraflor said.

Pacific Gas and Electric Co. President Chris Johns said Friday morning a steel gas pipe ruptured about three feet underground just before 6:30 p.m. Thursday, but crews still haven't been able to determine the cause of the rupture or the ensuing blast because they can't get close enough. The damaged section was isolated and gas flow to the area has been stopped. The blaze was 75 percent contained by midmorning, fire officials said.

Veraflor said she smelled gas at the house during a visit six weeks ago but did not report the smell to the utility.

"You'd get a whiff of it, and it would dissipate," she said.

Johns said the company has heard the reports that some residents smelled gas in the area before the blast.

"Right now, we haven't got confirmation about that, but we have records that we are going back right this minute to try to confirm what exactly those phone calls look like and when they occurred, and we will report back as soon as we know something."

After the initial blast, flames reached as high as 100 feet as the fire fueled itself on burning homes, leaving some in total ruins and reducing parked automobiles to burned out hulks.

"It was a continuous whooshing sound as if it was a fed fire," resident Michael Yost said. "It sounded like, you know, you would if you had a blow torch. It's that sound but, you know, a hundred times louder."

It's not the first time a deadly explosion on a PG&E gas line has devastated a Northern California neighborhood.

On Christmas Eve 2008 an explosion killed a 72-year-old man in the Sacramento suburb of Rancho Cordova, destroyed one home and seriously damaged others. □

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AAA returns with good results from Network Latin America in San Jose Costa Rica

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ORANJESTAD - Aruba Airport Authority's (AAA) Managing Director Peter Steinmetz and Business Unit Manager Terminal Barbara Brown recently attended Reed's Network Latin America in San Jose, Costa Rica, event which Aruba hosted in 2008. Numerous discussions were held with US and Latin American carriers present in order to discuss current service levels to Aruba and future opportunities. Certain airports were contacted in order to engage airlines in a combined effort.

The meetings confirmed most carriers solid advance bookings for this winter season and in a number of cases the AAA delegation returned with very positive news: Airtran is extending its weekend service from Atlanta to daily in the period March to May 2011 and will evaluate load factors and yield before deciding on continuing the schedule for the next winter. As expected, Copa Airlines will increase its schedule to 5 times a week starting summer 2011 and offers better connections through Panama to South American and Caribbean destinations due to amended departure times.

Managing Director Peter Steinmetz stated that "...airlines are generally very happy with Aruba's performance and advance bookings for this winter season. Our partners value our pro-active approach and Airtran and Copa's expansion plans are proof of how carefully we develop routes with our airline partners; it is a laborious process built on mutual commitment and trust." □

PM's of Aruba, St. Maarten and Curacao meet

Dutch Kingdom leaders unite



ORANJESTAD - Yesterday, The Honorable Prime Minister of Aruba Mike Eman met with the 1st Prime Minister of Country St. Maarten, The Honorable Mrs. Sarah Wescot-Williams and the 1st Prime Minister of Country Curacao, The Honorable Mr. Gerrit Schotte at Aruba's Parliament building in downtown Oranjestad.

No details were released about the content of the discussions between the new Prime Ministers in the Dutch Kingdom. On October 10th (10/10/10), the group of 5 islands known as the Netherlands Antilles was dissolved and Curaçao and St. Maarten became autonomous countries (still under the Dutch crown), while Saba, St. Eustatius and Bonaire were rezoned as



Dutch principalities.

Although St. Maarten and Curacao are now both separate countries within the Dutch Kingdom, the years of co-existence have left many family and business relationships that will go on despite the constitutional changes. □



Good turn-out third training session Boa constrictors!

1st National Boa hunt this Sunday



SAVANETA - On Thursday evening, December 9th, the third training session on capturing Boa constrictors was organized by the Centro di Bario Savaneta. Once again, the Takforce was very happy with the turnout. Over 70 volunteers showed up!

The highlight that evening was when the eleven year old Kai Visser, the son of Minister Richard Visser, volunteered to train how to capture a Boa. This young hero made matters seem so easy and in the

picture it can be seen how he handled and bagged the Boa within 60 seconds.

The picture also depicts him flanked by his father to the left and Diego Marquez, the Boa expert and Taskforce president, to his right.

The first national Boa-hunt is planned for Sunday December 12th.

Volunteers are expected at 8:00 a.m. at three locations. These are Seroe Crystal with as meeting point the

crossing of the rooi and the highway there. The second location is at the parking lot of the Drive-in. And the third location is at Seroe Preto in San Nicolas with the famous decorated Christmas lighthouse as meeting point. The hunt ends at 11 a.m. Volunteers are requested to register at boa.taskforce@gmail.com and to inform the organizers of their location of preference. The Taskforce hopes on a good turnout on Sunday. □

Catch your own dinner with Driftwood! Motto at Driftwood Restaurant: "From the pier to your plate!"

ORANJESTAD - The downtown marina is home of Driftwood Fishing Charters, the successful fishermen of the established seafood restaurant Driftwood in Oranjestad.

Driftwood owner Herby Merryweather has a love and passion for fishing. A fisherman who knows about fish, what our local waters have to offer, and what the words



"fresh seafood" really mean. What Herby catches will be served in his restaurant on

the same day. Herby loves to share his fishing passion with the many visitors to the island. His fleet of a 35 ft. Twin Engine Bertram yacht and a 50 ft. Twin Engine Post yacht, appropriately called "Driftwood I and II", is available for charters on a daily basis from 8am to

Catch your own dinner

12 noon and from 1pm to 5pm. A charter includes: captain, mate, all fishing equipment, bait, sodas and bottled water. On a full day charter sandwiches and snacks are also included. You can call Herby directly at (297) 592 4040 or go to www.driftwoodaruba.com.

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Rates per boat

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Driftwood Restaurant

This authentic Aruban seafood restaurant is located in characteristic downtown Oranjestad. Their extended

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Driftwood Restaurant

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www.driftwoodaruba.com

Opening hours: every day, but Tuesdays from 5pm till 10:30pm.

Special friends of Aruba honored at the Marriott Ocean Club Resort



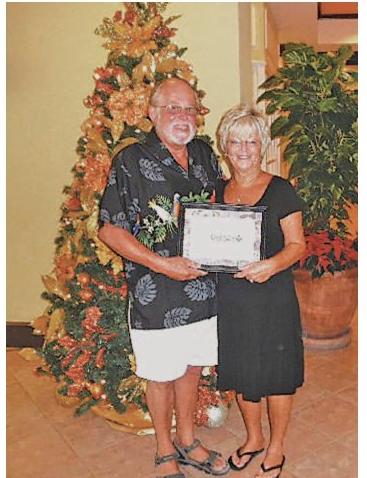
PALM BEACH - Recently at the Marriott Ocean Club Resort vacationers were presented with honorary titles created by the Ministry of Tourism as a

token of appreciation to guest visiting Aruba for ten and 20 consecutive years. Special friends of Aruba, enjoying ten or more annual vacations here, are

given the Distinguished Guest certificate and those with twenty consecutive years are awarded the Ambassador of Goodwill title. The recent honoring



were effected by the Aruba Tourism Authority associate Ricardo Croes at the Marriott Ocean Club Resort, where they call their home away from home. The following guests were honored as distinguished visitors after coming to Aruba for more than 10 years: Sylvester & Jo Ann Davis, Donald & Carol Stutrup and Dick & Chic Miller from Kansas. Picture ATA Rep. Ricardo Croes together with honorees and also staff from the Marriott Ocean Club Resort. □



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will yours! Enjoy live entertainment square are open until eleven. See what its like to experience real fresh dining joy with a twist!

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Loyal friends honored at the Renaissance Ocean Suites

Ambassadors of Goodwill recognized on Aruba



ORANJESTAD - Recently at the Renaissance Ocean Suites vacationers were presented with honorary titles created by the Ministry of Tourism as a token of appreciation to guest visiting Aruba for ten and 20 consecutive years. Special friends of Aruba, enjoying ten or more annual vacations here, are given the Distinguished Guest certificate and those

with twenty consecutive years are awarded the Ambassador of Goodwill title. The recent honoring were effected by the Aruba Tourism Authority associate Ricardo Croes at the Renaissance Ocean Suites, where they call their home away from home. Bob & Phyllis Devitt were honored as Ambassadors of Goodwill after visiting Aruba for 24 years. David



& Sandra Curtiss and Catherine O'Sullivan were also honored as a Distinguished Visitors. Miss Catherine commented that, "a rainy day in Aruba is still better than a good day at work in the States." Picture ATA Rep. Ricardo Croes together with honorees and Linda Garcia from The Renaissance Ocean Suites. □

CTA Caribbean Marketplace 2011 Experiences

Buyer Registrations show an increase in attendance

New Wholesalers from Russia, UK, USA & Canada

THE CARIBBEAN - The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CTA) is reporting an increase in buyer registrations for Caribbean Marketplace 2011 versus the same timeframe last year, including eight new wholesalers from Russia, Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom. Additionally, registrations from the UK have already surpassed last year's final UK numbers six weeks prior to the start of the conference.

"The numbers that we are seeing for Caribbean Marketplace 2011 illustrate that buyers are optimistic about business to the Caribbean region for the upcoming year and beyond," said Josef Forstmayr, president of CHTA. "With new wholesalers from Russia, United Kingdom, United States and Canada, there is clearly a growing interest in the Caribbean from markets all around the globe." □

"Our partners are eager to participate in the Caribbean's preeminent marketing event as they, along with our member hotels, are positioning themselves for the increased demand expected for 2011," noted Forstmayr. Caribbean Marketplace 2011 will be held at the new Montego Bay Convention Centre from Jan. 16-18, 2011 and presented by CHTA, the Jamaica Hotel and Tourism Association (JHTA), the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB), MasterCard and Virgin Holidays. Caribbean Marketplace is the requisite business-to-business marketing event for the Caribbean hotel and tourism industry which follows the "All Tourism, All Caribbean, All Business" mantra throughout the entire program. At Caribbean Marketplace, hoteliers meet, network, negotiate and conduct business with buyers from around the world. □



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What really drives suicide terrorists?

By Robert Pape

Chicago – From the 9/11 hijackers to the double agent whose suicide attack in Afghanistan killed seven CIA employees last December, many people want to know what drives some Muslims – many of whom are middle class and well educated – to kill themselves in attacks on Americans and others in the West.

After examining 2,200 suicide attacks around the world since 1980 — the most comprehensive analysis ever conducted — I've concluded that the answer is both simple and disturbing. What drives them is deep anger at the presence of Western combat forces in the Persian Gulf region and other predominantly Muslim lands.

Popular accounts of these suicide terrorists give the impression that most of them are globe-trotting extremists radicalized by militant networks to strike outside their homeland for religious or other transnational causes. These accounts are false.

Five key members of Al Qaeda in Yemen (AQAP) What the evidence shows In the 2,200 suicide attacks since 1980, over 90 percent of the attackers carried out strikes in their home countries, often just miles from their homes, to resist foreign occupation of land they prize

Hence, Lebanese carried out the suicide attacks against Israel's occupation of Lebanon; Turkish Kurds carried out the suicide attacks by the Kurdistan Workers' Party against the Turkish military presence in their home areas; and

Iraqis, Saudis, Syrians, Kuwaitis, and Jordanians carried out the suicide attacks against America's military occupation of Iraq and the US threat to countries adjacent to Iraq. Afghanistan is a prime example. We can identify 93 suicide attackers who have killed themselves to strike targets, mostly US and Western troops, in Afghanistan in recent years. More than 90 percent are Afghan nationals and another 5 percent are from border regions of the country, while only 5 percent are from areas of the world beyond the immediate zone of conflict. In other words, suicide terrorism in Afghanistan is not part of some global jihad looking for a place to land, but regional opposition to foreign military presence. We're missing the real threat Transnational suicide terrorists do exist. But, they are exceptions to the rule. Understanding that transnational suicide attackers are "black swans" has important implications for explaining their existence. For years, many have sought to explain how an individual becomes a transnational terrorist by seeking to track points along a spectrum of radicalization. The basic idea is that there is a large pool of potential extremists who become progressively radicalized either through elite manipulation (religious leaders in mosques) or through social and economic alienation. Hence, policymakers embrace the idea of eavesdropping on many thousands of Muslims in the United States and Europe. This has done little

to find terrorists, but a lot to scare many loyal citizens. The fundamental problem with the “spectrum of radicalization” approach is that it is looking for many “white swans” that do not exist, while missing the rare black swans that might. Consider the London suicide attacks in July 2005. Even if we restrict the pool of potential extremists to the 1.6 million Muslims living in Britain then, the spectrum of radicalization approach would expect more “homegrown” suicide attackers by orders of magnitude. After all, tens of thousands of British Muslims had met fundamentalist leaders in mosques, lost their jobs, or faced social difficulties that they might view as related to their ethnic or religious backgrounds. But just four men launched the attack. Further, after a year-long investigation, MI5 found little evidence that any of the four London bombers were economically or socially alienated in significant ways. Mohammad Khan, the leader, was a mentor at a primary school with an exemplary employment record. Shezad Tanweer drove his own red Mercedes to work in one of his father’s several businesses and was a trophy-winning cricket player. Another was known for going to night clubs and talking about girls and cars. None had a history of outbursts or violence, or other signs of significant opposition to British life. What they did share was deep anger at Western occupation of kindred Muslim populations. Mr. Kahn and Mr. Tanweer left martyr videos to explain their motives.

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abroad. Further, aggressive surveillance missed the one behavior trait that the American and British transnational terrorists had in common: self-initiated efforts to communicate with representatives of Al Qaeda and other known terrorist groups to receive approval for their actions.

Counterterrorism operations should focus on what makes these rare events dangerous – that is, the point at which politically active groups seek detailed information and actual materials for lethal action, commonly from international terrorist

organizations or their local representatives.
Top 5 attacks linked to

Yemeni cleric Anwar al-Awlaki
Law enforcement attempts to track large numbers of young Muslim men would incorrectly profile and target an entire community.

Such manpower takes resources away from the most productive counterterrorism measure: the search for specific preparations for violent acts.

Robert A. Pape is professor of political science at the University of Chicago and co-author of "Cutting the Fuse: The Explosion of Global Suicide Terrorism and How to Stop It" □



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Haiti protests ease, U.S. senator pressures govt

JONATHAN M. KATZ

Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — Shops opened sporadically, the airport took in cargo flights and fewer flaming barricades blocked streets Friday as Haiti's capital struggled to emerge from two days of riots over the disputed presidential election.

Officials worked behind the scenes to find a solution to the political crisis as an influential U.S. senator called for U.S. aid to be cut off to Haiti until a fair and democratic outcome to the election is found.

Demonstrators still clashed occasionally with U.N. peacekeepers and Haitian police, but overall conditions improved somewhat as the political factions awaited the results of a recount by the country's elections board.

Preliminary results showed that two candidates — former first lady and law professor Mirlande Manigat, and businessman Jude Celestin of the governing Unity party — were the top vote-getters in the Nov. 28 election and would compete in a January runoff.

All the candidates, including the apparent winners, claim the election was marred by fraud.

The strongest objections, however, are coming from the third-place finisher, singer Michel Martelly, whose supporters flooded the streets in protest after preliminary results said he narrowly missed the runoff.

Martelly said Friday that he expected the new count of ballots by the Provisional Electoral Council, or CEP, to show he actually won the

election.

"We are expecting the CEP to come back on their results and acknowledge the fraud, because it's the people's vote they are playing with and the people are very upset," Martelly told The Associated Press.

"We can only wait and hope at the same time and ask for them to wake up and do what's right for the country."

But even if the recount puts him in the runoff, the candidate, known on stage as "Sweet Mickey," said he would not compete if Celestin is still in the race. He claims that Celestin, a member of President Rene Preval's party, only made it to the runoff because his supporters committed fraud.

Martelly also said his supporters were not responsible for the violent protests that have paralyzed Haiti in recent days and blamed infiltrators from rival factions. Celestin, meanwhile, has called those who back him to take to the streets in nonviolent demonstrations. Manigat has stayed silent.

U.S. Sen. Patrick Leahy, chairman of a Senate subcommittee that oversees appropriations for Haiti, said Friday said that the election results showed the Haitian government was trying to "subvert the will of the people."

The Vermont Democrat said President Barack Obama's administration should withhold funding to Haiti's government and suspend U.S. travel visas for senior Haitian officials and their family members.

Months before the election,



U.N. peacekeepers shoot rubber bullets to protesters as they ride through a barricade in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Friday, Dec. 10, 2010. Despite the country's electoral council announcement Thursday of a compromise to recount votes, clashes between protesters and authorities continued in Port-au-Prince.

Associated Press

Sen. Richard Lugar of Indiana, the ranking Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, issued a report saying Haiti was not prepared to hold a credible election and called on Preval to make reforms. Preval rejected that report.

The U.S. State Department expressed concern this week that the vote did not match expectations of Haitian, U.S. and other observers and said it believed Celestin would be eliminated.

But spokesman P.J. Crowley said Friday that it was too early for a move like the one Leahy proposed.

"We will judge our future relationship by the actions that Haiti undertakes ... and we are committed to supporting ... this process. But let's wait until we see what happens

first and then we'll judge the implications," Crowley told reporters in Washington.

People in Port-au-Prince, meanwhile, were trying to get back to their daily lives while stocking up on provisions in case of further trouble.

Long lines formed at gas stations, forcing some to close temporarily when crowds became unruly. Similar conditions existed at markets, where people rushed to buy water and other essentials.

But many people, including employees of U.N. and foreign non-governmental organizations, stayed off the streets, hampering efforts to help a country struggling with the aftermath of the January earthquake and a spreading cholera epidemic.

Jackson Gabriel, who lives in a Petionville encampment for

people left homeless by the quake, blamed Preval for the country's latest troubles. The people there have spent two days choking on tear gas fired by U.N. troops at protesters trying to reach an electoral council office.

"This is because of the catastrophe President Preval put the country through," Gabriel, 28, said after waiting two hours to buy gasoline for his motorcycle so he could take a sick relative to a hospital. "There was fraud and now there are people who are sick who can't go to the doctor."

Cargo flights were landing at the country's main airport but American Airlines, the largest passenger carrier to serve Haiti, said its flights were canceled at least through Monday. □

Jailed Chinese dissident honored at Nobel ceremony



The empty chair, diploma and medal that should have been awarded to this year's Nobel Peace Prize winner Liu Xiaobo, photo at left, in seen in the City Hall in Oslo, Norway on Friday Dec. 10, 2010.

**BJOERN H. AMLAND
MATTI HUHTANEN**
Associated Press

OSLO, Norway (AP) — With a large portrait of a smiling Liu Xiaobo hanging front and center, the chairman of the Norwegian Nobel Committee crossed the dais and gently placed the peace prize diploma and medal on an empty chair. Ambassadors, royalty and other dignitaries rose in a standing ovation.

The man they honored wasn't there Friday — he is serving an 11-year sentence at Jinzhou Prison in northeastern China for urging sweeping changes to Beijing's one-party communist political system.

And there was no news coverage of it in China, where foreign TV news channels went black as the ceremony began and authorities denounced the award as a "political farce."

It was the first time in 74 years the prestigious \$1.4 million Nobel Peace Prize was not handed over.

Committee chairman Thorbjørn Jagland drew

Associated Press

the first of several standing ovations from the international gathering of 1,000 guests at Oslo City Hall when he noted that neither Liu nor his closest relatives were able to attend. "This fact alone shows that the award was necessary and appropriate," he said. He brought the crowd to its feet again when he declared: "He has not done anything wrong. He must be released."

China was infuriated when

the Nobel committee awarded

the prize to the 54-year-old

literary critic, describing it

as an attack on its political

and legal system. Authorities

have placed Liu's supporters,

including his wife, Liu Xia,

under house arrest to prevent

anyone from picking up his

prize.

After Jagland drew another standing ovation by placing the medal and diploma on Liu's empty chair, Norwegian actress Liv Ullman read the dissident's statement, "I Have No Enemies," which he delivered in a Chinese court in 2009 before he was sentenced.

In the speech, Liu portrays

the surprisingly positive

and gentle nature of his

correctional officer while

awaiting trial, which gave him

hope for the future.

That "personal experience" caused him to "firmly believe that China's political progress will not stop," Ullman read.

"I, filled with optimism, look

forward to the advent of a

future free China," she quoted

Liu as saying.

Lynn Chang, a Chinese-

American violinist, then performed a haunting Chinese melody, "Colorful Clouds Chasing the Moon" and "Jasmine Flowers."

But ordinary viewers in China saw none of it. Both CNN and BBC TV channels went black at 8 p.m. local time for nearly an hour, exactly when the Oslo ceremony began.

Security outside Liu's Beijing apartment was heavy and several dozen journalists were herded by police to a cordoned-off area. Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu said the awarding of the peace prize to Liu reflected a Cold War mentality, infringed upon China's judicial sovereignty and "does not represent the wish of the majority of the people in the world, particularly that of the developing countries."

"He did not do any harm to the country and the people in the world. He just fulfilled his responsibility," Wan told AP. "But he suffered a lot of pain for his speeches, journals and advocacy of rights."

After the ceremony, a torchlight parade meandered through Oslo's dark, snowy streets and ended at the Grand Hotel where the laureate normally spends the night. Hundreds of torch-bearing demonstrators gathered near the hotel and chanted: "Democracy Now" and "Free Liu Xiaobo."

Outside Parliament, the Norwegian-Chinese Association held a pro-China rally with a handful of people proclaiming that awarding the prize to Liu was a mistake. □

from the ceremony, with 16 other countries joining their boycott, including Russia, Pakistan, Iran, Venezuela and Cuba. At least 46 of the 65 countries with embassies in Oslo accepted invitations.

U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who attended with U.S. Ambassador Barry White, told The Associated Press that "Liu Xiaobo has been a hero to all of us."

About 100 Chinese dissidents in exile and some activists from Hong Kong also attended. Chinese dissident Wan Yanhai, the only one on a list of 140 activists in China invited by Liu's wife to attend the ceremony, said the jubilation felt by many at Liu's honor will be tinged with sadness.

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Mexico: Eccentric La Familia cartel chief killed

ALEXANDRA OLSON

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The eccentric leader of the brutal La Familia drug cartel was killed in a shootout during two days of fighting between federal police and gunmen that terrified civilians across a western Mexican state, the government said Friday.

The death of Nazario Moreno Gonzalez — nicknamed “The Craziest One” — is a major blow to a drug cartel that rose to national prominence four years ago by rolling severed heads into a nightclub and declaring that its mission was to protect Michoacan state from rival gangs and petty criminals.

Police believed that the 40-year-old Gonzalez — also known as “El Chayo” or “The Doctor” — was killed in a clash Thursday between cartel gunmen and federal police, said Alejandro Poire, the government spokesman for security issues.

In a brief statement, the office of President Felipe Calderon confirmed Moreno’s death. Cartel gunmen have been fleeing with their casualties and Moreno’s body has not been recovered, Poire said. Police recovered the bodies of three other suspected La Familia members and detained three others.

Five officers and three civilians — including an 8-month-old baby and a teenage girl — were also killed in the shootouts, which began Wednesday night, when La Familia gunmen attacked federal officers in Moreno’s home city of Apatzingan and fired on cars.

The gunmen torched vehicles across Michoacan and used them as barricades, even blockading all entrances into its capital of Morelia to prevent federal police from sending reinforcements.

Moreno is considered the ideological leader of La Familia, setting a code of

conduct for its members that prohibits using hard drugs or dealing them within Mexican territory. He purportedly has written a religiously tinted book of values for the cartel, sometimes known as “The Sayings of the Craziest One.” In February, the U.S. government added Moreno and six other reputed La Familia leaders to its “Kingpin Act” list, a move that prohibits American citizens and firms from having any business dealings with them and freezes any U.S. assets they may have. Back in 2003, a federal grand jury in McAllen, Texas, indicted Moreno on charges that included conspiracy to distribute marijuana, cocaine and methamphetamine.

Poire said Moreno emerged as the leader of La Familia in 2006, when the gang — then known as “The Business” — broke off from the Gulf cartel and declared its independence by rolling the severed heads into a disco in the mountain

town of Uruapan.

A message left with the heads declared: “La Familia doesn’t kill for money, doesn’t kill women, doesn’t kill innocents. Only those who deserve to die will die.”

Calderon, who was born in Michoacan, responded by deploying tens of thousands of soldiers to the state to crush the cartel — an increasingly bloody fight that has since expanded to other drug trafficking hotspots across the country.

The crackdown has picked up pace over the past year: Moreno was the fourth top leader of a drug gang killed in shootouts with security forces since December 2009 and three other alleged cartel leaders have been arrested.

But the victories have had a bloody cost: 28,000 people have been killed in drug-gang violence since 2006.

La Familia has since become one of the biggest methamphetamine traffickers



A municipal police patrol car is reflected on a bullet-riddled window after gunmen strafed the entrance to a dance hall in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico Friday, Dec. 10, 2010. Businesses in Juarez are being hard hit by extortion rackets and many have had to close their doors.

Associated Press

to the United States. Meanwhile, the cartel has proclaimed in banners and even newspaper advertisements that it is trying to protect Michoacan from other cartels and common criminals. □



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Famous Christian landmark tree chopped down in UK



Paper decorations hang from the vandalized Glastonbury Holy Thorn Tree which has been hacked down and reduced to just a stump in Glastonbury western England Friday Dec. 10, 2010.

Associated Press

GREGORY KATZ

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Legend has it that the rare thorn tree on a hill in southern England had ties to the earliest days of Christianity, and pilgrims often left offerings at its base. In more recent times, local children honored its current incarnation each year by cutting sprigs to place on Queen Elizabeth II's Christmas dining table.

Now British police want to know who sawed the limbs off the Glastonbury Holy Thorn Tree, reducing it to a stump. And they want to know why. "I've just driven past the site, and people are coming out in tears," said Glastonbury Mayor John Coles. "I've never seen a sadder sight, or a more serious act of vandalism, in my 60 years in Glastonbury."

Glastonbury, 125 miles west

of London, is best known for its annual rock music festival, which has drawn artists such as Bruce Springsteen since the 1960s. Its mysterious landscape — including the Glastonbury Tor hill, which is believed by some to have magical qualities — has drawn pagan worshippers for many years.

Katherine Gorbing, the director of Glastonbury Abbey, said the tree originally came from the Middle East and is a type of thorn tree common in Lebanon as well as in Europe. It typically lives about 100 years, but Gorbing said locals have kept Glastonbury Holy Thorn Tree going by taking grafts and clippings from it to plant new trees when the existing one neared the end of its natural life.

"It's a sacred tree," she said. "Not only for the Christian church, but for many other people."

The tree itself, located near the summit of Wearyall Hill,

is visible from many parts of rural Somerset.

Coles said the nighttime attack came between Wednesday and Thursday shortly after he, the local vicar and schoolchildren participated in the annual sprig cutting for the queen's Christmas table.

The sprig is sometimes visible during her televised Christmas broadcast to the Commonwealth — and the queen always sends a letter of thanks, he said.

Coles believes that someone who saw the sprig ceremony on local television — or who witnessed it in person — decided afterward to chop down the tree, which did not have any security cameras nearby.

"It could be an anti-monarchist, an anti-Christian, or someone who's an atheist," Coles said. "We don't know whether it's one person responsible or a group."

Avon and Somerset police would not comment on the

motive. No arrests have been made.

The once-proud tree provides Glastonbury believers with what legend says is a significant link to the early days of Christianity in England.

Religious tradition holds that the original tree was planted by St. Joseph of Arimathea — the wealthy merchant who volunteered his prepared tomb to Jesus — after he first made landfall in England some 2,000 years ago.

The chopped-down tree is thought to be descended from the original. It blooms twice a year — during the Christmas season and again around Easter.

"The story goes that Joseph of Arimathea pushed his staff into the ground and pronounced it to be weary — that's why it's known as Wearyall Hill," said Coles. "The tree is said to have grown from the staff. It's something you can't prove or disprove." □

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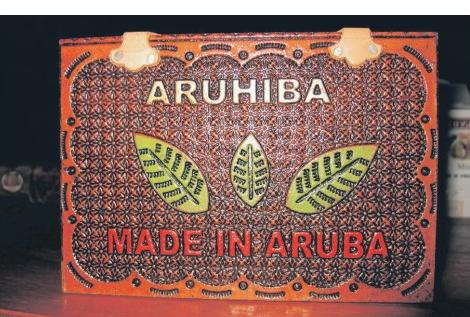
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Saturday, December 11, 2010

Surging Sidney



Pittsburgh Penguins' Sidney Crosby celebrates after his third goal of an NHL hockey game against the Atlanta Thrashers, during the second period of an NHL hockey game in Pittsburgh, Thursday, Dec. 2, 2010.

Associated Press

Crosby's surge reminiscent of Gretzky, Lemieux

ALAN ROBINSON

AP Sports Writer

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Bill Guerin played alongside Sidney Crosby for the Pittsburgh Penguins for more than a season, so he knows what he's watching from afar now that's he retired.

It's beyond special, beyond what the NHL has seen for a long time. Wayne Gretzky and Mario Lemieux scored like this, dazzled like this, singularly decided game after game like Crosby is doing. But no one else has since they left the game.

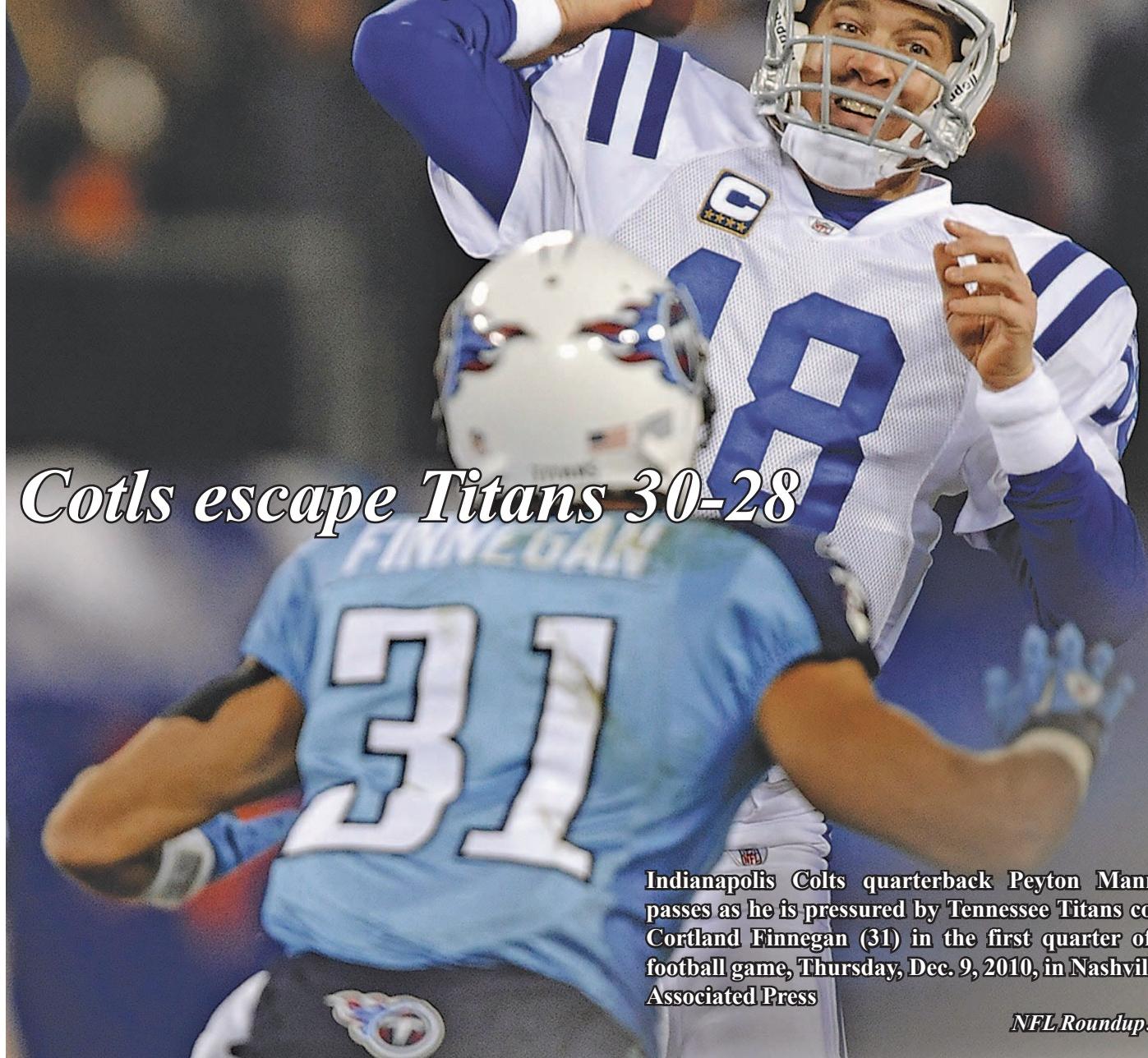
"I was lucky enough to play against Gretzky, play against Mario, (Jaromir) Jagr, those guys," said Guerin, who scored 429 goals in his career. "But what Sidney's doing right now, it's like an assault on the game. I think he's so driven, like a player that I've never seen before."

Continued on Page B8

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Cotls escape Titans 30-28

Indianapolis Colts quarterback Peyton Manning (18) passes as he is pressured by Tennessee Titans cornerback Cortland Finnegan (31) in the first quarter of an NFL football game, Thursday, Dec. 9, 2010, in Nashville, Tenn.

Associated Press

NFL Roundup... Page B4

Tinning, Reid tied at Dubai Ladies Masters

MICHAEL CASEY

AP Sports Writer

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Danish veteran Iben Tinning, playing in her final Ladies European Tour tournament, was tied for the lead Friday with England's Melissa Reid going into the final round of the Dubai Ladies Masters. The 36-year-old Tinning, who will retire after 15 years on the tour, was two shots back at the halfway mark but had four birdies on her way to a 3-under 69 to pass overnight leader Lydia Hall of England. Reid was three shots back but managed her best score of the tournament

— a 4-under 68 — to grab a share of the lead on the final hole at the season-ending tournament in Dubai.

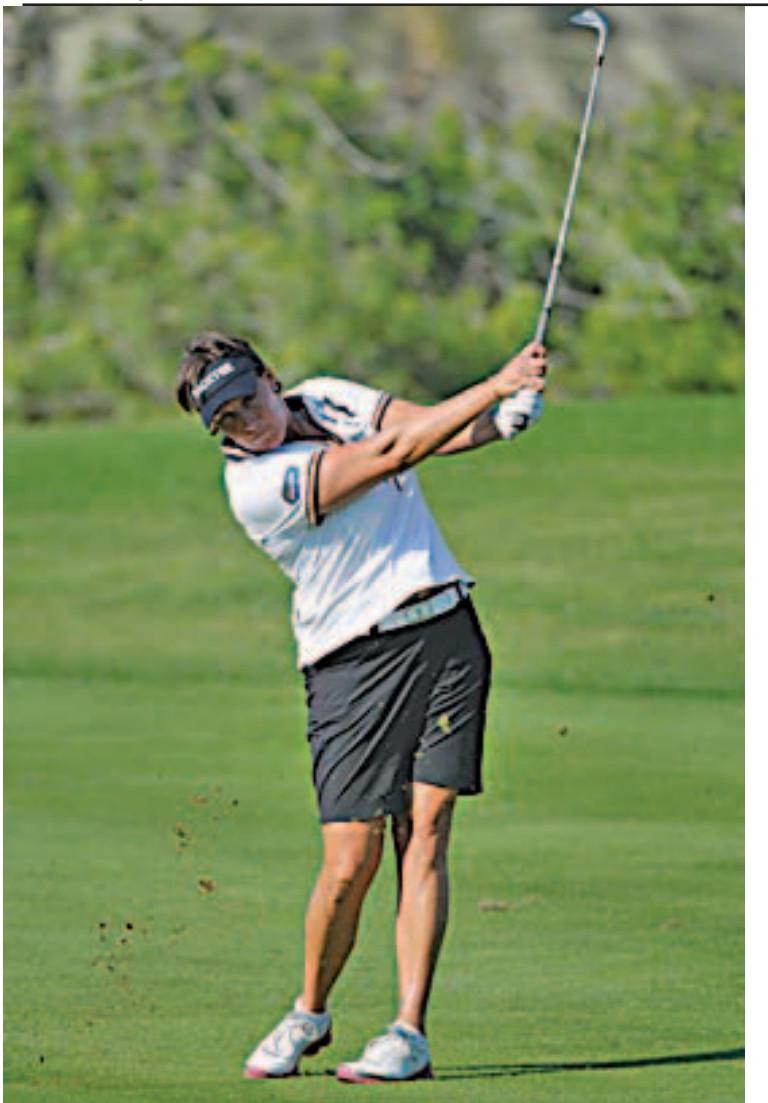
Hall remained in the hunt a shot back, after she recovered from an early double bogey to shoot even par and remain at 7 under. She was tied with 16th-ranked Anna Nordqvist of Sweden who briefly topped the leaderboard before falling back after carding a late bogey.

American Michelle Wie, battling back troubles, had a rollercoaster round. She birdied the third hole to go 2 under, but then had two bogeys on the back nine before stringing together two birdies. She

double-bogeyed the 18th to move to even par 216 for the tournament and a tie for 17th. Tinning hasn't won on the tour since a 2005 victory in Denmark and admitted she had butterflies early on knowing she was battling for the lead. She calmed down and went on to play some of her best golf of the tournament, aggressively going for the pins and making several clutch putts including one on 15 to save par and on 16 for a birdie.

"This morning when I went out to play, I was really nervous the first few holes," she said.

Continued on Next Page



Iben Tinning of Denmark plays a shot toward the 10th green during the third round of the Dubai Ladies Masters held at The Emirates Golf Club, Dubai, on Friday, Dec. 10, 2010.

Associated Press

Stricker-Kelly, Johnson-Poulter tied at Shootout

NAPLES, Florida (AP) — Steve Stricker and Jerry Kelly combined for a 9-under 63 and Dustin Johnson and Ian Poulter matched them to share the first-round lead at the Shark Shootout on Friday.

Stricker and Kelly, the defending champions, led for most of the day in the modified alternate-shot format. They had a two-stroke lead at 10 under until bogeying the par-5 17th when Stricker knocked his second shot near the lip of a greenside bunker.

Johnson and Poulter birdied No. 16 to get to 9 under.

The 63s tied the mark for low score in the modified alternate-shot format in the 10 years that the tournament has been played at Tiburon Golf Club.

"I think it was a dream start, to be honest," Poulter said.

The overall format record is a 57 by Fred Couples and Raymond Floyd in 1990 at Sherwood Country Club in California. The 12 teams in the tournament hosted by Greg Norman will play better ball Saturday, and a scramble on Sunday in the \$3 million event.

Mark Calcavecchia and Jeff Overton, who grabbed the early lead with an eagle-birdie start, and Fred Funk and Kenny Perry were tied for third at 8 under. Justin Leonard and Scott Verplank were fifth at 6 under.

Members of those three teams in contention have good records in the event.

DUBAI LADIES

Continued from Front Page

"And it was funny. I said to my husband 'well, this is actually what I'm going to miss'. So I've got to enjoy it, even though it was a bit terrifying."

Tinning acknowledged she "wasn't prepared" to be at the top of the leaderboard going into Sunday's final round but said she would continue pushing herself knowing "she has nothing to lose."

"I've been waiting for a career win for what six years and I think it's about time and that's probably one of my last chances," the 110th-ranked Tinning said. Reid, who won her first tournament in Turkey earlier this year, moved into contention after making three birdies on the front nine and said she was "quite happy" to finish with two more birdies on the final two holes. Despite a lone bogey on nine after she hit

into the water, Reid said she "played solid today" and said she was in good position to earn her second tour victory.

"Yeah, it would be a nice little Christmas present, wouldn't it, to win this week," said the 67th-ranked Reid.

Hall appeared to be fading after a double-bogey on the second but she settled to get four birdies on the back nine. A relative unknown on the tour who has yet to finish better than sixth, Hall credited her improved performance with a training routine over the past 10 weeks and work on her swing that has resulted in an extra 10 yards on many of her shots.

"There are huge names on the leaderboard and I'm just concentrating on myself, one shot at a time," she said. "We'll see what happens. Anything can happen."

Wie, who rushed to the practice putting green after

her round, lamented some missed opportunities on the front nine where she parred every hole except one and the par 5s where the normally big-hitting Wie had two bogeys and a double bogey to go along with a lone par.

"I didn't play well on the par 5 in the end. Oh well," Wie said. "I didn't make any birdie putts in the beginning which is a struggle for me. Other than that, I played pretty solid. I just have to monkey with a couple of shots." □

Gates take 2nd-round lead in the Australian PGA

By DENNIS PASSA

AP Sports Writer

COOLUM, Australia

— Bobby Gates shot a 3-under 69 on Friday to take the second-round lead in the Australian PGA, while fellow American John Daly had an 83 to miss the cut on the Coolum layout where he had one of his most famous career meltdowns. Gates, who earned a 2011 PGA Tour card with a 16th-place finish this season on the Nationwide Tour money list, had an 11-under 133 total for a one-stroke lead over China's Liang Wenchong (68) and Australian John Senden (65). Defending champion Robert Allenby (68) was five strokes behind Gates.

"This is one of the national championships down here, and it's a way for the Australian guys to showcase that they're some of the best players in the world," Gates said. "So to come down here, I can see how my game stacks up with them. I know they're all playing well because it's on their home turf, so it makes me want to try and play harder because I know I have to try and keep up with them." □



Steve Stricker tees off on the sixth hole during the first round of the Chevron World Challenge golf tournament at Sherwood Country Club in Thousand Oaks, Calif., Thursday, Dec. 2, 2010.

Associated Press

Calcavecchia, who is playing in his 17th Shootout, has won twice, and so has Perry. Leonard and Verplank lost in a playoff in 2006, and tied for second last year.

Norman and partner Matt Kuchar were last in the field after a 72.

Both of the leading teams stumbled down the stretch. Sitting at 8-under through 11 holes, Johnson and Poulter bogeyed the par-3 12th and, despite the long-hitting Johnson, the duo parred both the par-5 14th and 17th.

"Parring the two par-5s was brutal," Johnson said. "It was no fun. No. 14 was playing pretty tough, but No. 17 was playing fairly easy. We hit four pretty good shots and we made a 5."

Stricker and Kelly were at 10 under through 15, then bogeyed the par-5 17th after Stricker knocked his second shot near the lip of a greenside bunker. Kelly was forced to play the ball directly to the left instead of straight at the pin, then barely got it out of the bunker. He missed a 10-footer for par. They missed the green at the last, but two-putted for par. □

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NFL Preview

Prove it time in NFL for Bears, Jags, Rams

BARRY WILNER**AP Pro Football Writer**

NEW YORK (AP) — Three NFL division leaders have a chance to prove their playoff prospects this weekend. For the St. Louis Rams and Chicago Bears, the task couldn't be much more difficult. For the Jacksonville Jaguars, the challenge is somewhat easier.

St. Louis, which won only once last season, heads to New Orleans, where the Saints celebrated their first Super Bowl title in February. A mismatch? Hardly.

The Rams under rookie quarterback Sam Bradford are tied for the NFC West lead at 6-6 and won their last two road games. Even if beating the Saints is beyond their reach, getting into the playoffs for the first time since 2005 isn't.

"Of course we respect the fact they won the Super Bowl, but that was last season," Rams cornerback Ron Bartel said. "We're more concerned with ourselves. It's a big game for us, we're trying to get to the playoffs. It's a big game for them, they're trying to win their division just like us. So the Super Bowl and all that, that's out of the window."

Chicago, atop the NFC North, hosts the AFC East-leading New England Patriots and gets the opportunity to show all those skeptics that its turnaround is for real.

Patriots coach Bill Belichick believes it. After calling the Bears' third-ranked defense "disruptive," Belichick then praised Chicago's offense and special teams. The Bears have won five in a row, one more than the Patriots have.

"They're a very explosive team that can score on any play from anywhere," Belichick said. "They can throw a 90-yard touchdown pass or (Matt) Forte can make a 67, 70-yard run. Or (they get a) strip sack, turnovers, kick returns. They're very, very dangerous."

Jacksonville coach Jack Del Rio was on the hot seat when the season began. Now he is in the AFC South driver's seat: If the Jaguars win the rest of their games, they take the division title. The first step toward that could be taken against the Oakland Raiders on Sunday.

"We've embraced every challenge, kind of identified what it is and then gotten prepared for the opportunities," Del Rio said.



Chicago Bears tight end Brandon Manumaleuna (86) is congratulated by teammates after his touchdown in the fourth quarter of an NFL football game against the Detroit Lions at Ford Field in Detroit, Sunday, Dec. 5, 2010.

Associated Press

"It hasn't always played out the way we'd like, but I think we've learned some lessons from those experiences, and then we go back and make the corrections and keep plugging ahead, and so that part's been very good."

Four teams: New England, the Pittsburgh Steelers, Atlanta Falcons and the New York

Jets, can clinch playoff berths, although it's a complicated scenario for all but the Patriots. If they win, they're in.

The Steelers are home for the Cincinnati Bengals, the Falcons are at the Carolina Panthers, and the Jets host their division rival Miami Dolphins.

Also on Sunday, it's

Philadelphia at Dallas, the New York Giants at Minnesota, Green Bay at Detroit, Kansas City at San Diego, Seattle at San Francisco, Tampa Bay at Washington, Cleveland at Buffalo, and Denver at Arizona. On Monday, Baltimore is at Houston. □

Broncos rookie arrested in alleged sexual assault

By PAT GRAHAM and P. SOLOMON BANDA

Associated Press

CASTLE ROCK, Colo. — Denver Broncos rookie cornerback Perrish Cox has been arrested for investigation of felony sexual assault.

Cox was taken into custody Thursday night following an investigation into an alleged assault reported on Oct. 28 and brought to a Douglas County jail, said

Michelle Kivela, public information officer for the city of Lone Tree, which is about 20 miles south of Denver.

Cox appeared Friday in Douglas County Court in nearby Castle Rock wearing a gray prison uniform. His feet were shackled and he was escorted by an armed sheriff's deputy.

A judge declined a defense attorney's request to reduce a \$50,000 bond but did say that Cox can leave the state two

times — apparently to play in Broncos road games at Arizona this weekend and at Oakland on Dec. 19. Cox waived extradition, meaning he agreed not to fight transport back to Colorado if for some reason he were arrested out of state.

Cox posted bail Friday afternoon and was released from custody, according to Douglas County jail guard Chad Walker. □



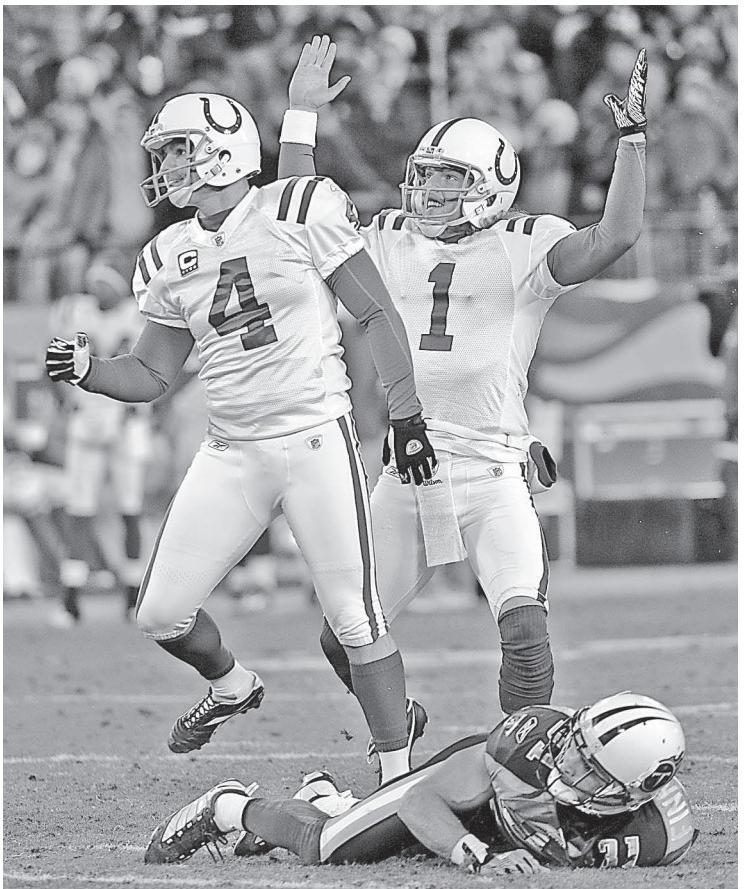
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NFL Roundup

Manning throws for 319, Colts beat Titans 30-28



Indianapolis Colts quarterback Peyton Manning (18) passes as he is pressured by Tennessee Titans cornerback Cortland Finnegan (31) in the first quarter of an NFL football game, Thursday, Dec. 9, 2010, in Nashville, Tenn.

Associated Press

By TERESA M. WALKER
AP Sports Writer

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Peyton Manning wants people to quit

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worrying about him. He's just fine, thank you very much.

Manning threw for 319 yards and two touchdowns, and the Indianapolis Colts snapped their three-game skid by beating the Tennessee Titans 30-28 on Thursday night to stay just a half-game back in the AFC South.

"Nobody likes losing three in a row," Manning said. "That's new for us. Somebody asked me if we were in a slump. I said, 'I've been on an 8 1/2-year hitting streak.'"

The four-time NFL MVP put his atypical slump behind him with a crisp performance against a defense that hasn't intercepted a pass in 14 straight quarters, beating the Titans for a fourth straight time. He completed 25 of 35 passes in his 63rd 300-yard game, tying Dan Marino for tops on the career list.

Back in the state where he starred at the University of Tennessee, Manning nearly had a third touchdown pass but rookie receiver Blair White broke up a pass intended for Reggie Wayne in the end zone. "I was throwing to Reggie. I can assure you I was throwing to Reggie," Manning said.

"But like I said, that's part of the learning process."

The Colts (7-6) haven't lost four straight since 2001 when their five-game slide prompted Jim Mora's famous rant about the playoffs. Now the only NFL team to reach the postseason in 10 of the last 11 seasons is back on track and will defend its AFC South title if it wins out.

"I think we're in a four-game playoffs, and this was a playoff game tonight," Manning said. Tennessee (5-8) has lost six straight to drop 2 1/2 games behind Jacksonville in the division with three to play. The Titans can blame themselves for mistakes that led to each of the Colts' first three touchdowns, including two defensive penalties on third-and-goal and a high snap over the punter's head.

"Every time we play the Colts, it's been the same thing," safety Chris Hope said. "By the time we figure out we can play with them and compete with them, we run out of time. It's been the same story the last few times we've played them."

One fan showed up wearing a grocery bag over his head with

"Jeff Fisher: A commitment to mediocrity" written on it, referring to the Titans coach. The Titans did break out of their scoring slump, ending a 14-quarter drought without an offensive touchdown when Chris Johnson finished off a 55-yard drive with a 1-yard run with 49 seconds left in the first half. Johnson finished with 111 yards rushing.

Tennessee closed to 27-21 when Kerry Collins tossed his second TD pass of the night, a 4-yarder to Bo Scaife with 7:59 left in the game. The defense forced the Colts to go three-and-out, and the momentum seemed to swing to the Titans for the first time. But Tennessee couldn't pick up a first down, and fans booed when Fisher sent out the punting unit on fourth-and-1. Manning made the Titans pay with a slant to Pierre Garcon, who shook off Jason McCourty and Hope while safety Michael Griffin whiffed as the receiver slipped up the right sideline for a 43-yard play. Adam Vinatieri ended the drive with his third field goal, a 47-yarder that made it 30-21 with 2:55 left.

"Peyton was Peyton. I'm sure he felt good about his performance, and certainly we did as well," Colts coach Jim Caldwell said.

Injury-riddled Indianapolis finished the game with just five healthy offensive linemen, making the win even more precious. "It's tough to do in this league," Caldwell said. "It feels good, particularly our guys had to fight through some injuries."

The Titans used up every second trying to rally. Collins found Scaife again for a 2-yard TD pass as time expired.

"It was good," Fisher said. "It just happened too late."

Collins finished with 244 yards passing and three TDs, giving him 200 for his career. But it was Manning who really got back on track, putting the Colts up 21-7 at halftime with TD passes of 1 and 19 yards to Garcon after tossing a career-worst 11 interceptions during Indianapolis' slide. □



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NHL Roundup

Vokoun blanks Capitals for Panthers 3-0 victory

WASHINGTON (AP) — Tomas Vokoun stopped 36 shots in his third shutout of the season as the Florida Panthers ended a six-game losing streak against the Washington Capitals with a 3-0 victory Thursday.

Michael Frolik, Steve Bernier and Mike Santorelli scored for the Panthers, who have won a season-high three straight. Florida went 0-6 against Washington last season.

Vokoun has 19 shutouts with the Panthers and 41 overall in 13 NHL seasons.

Bruins 5, Islanders 2

At Boston, Milan Lucic scored two goals and Tuukka Rask made 33 saves to lift Boston over the New York Islanders.

Boston extended the Islanders' futility to 1-15-3 in their past 19 games. New York, which has lost 11 straight road games, hasn't won since beating New Jersey at home on Nov. 26.

Flyers 4, Maple Leafs 1 At Toronto, Danny Briere scored twice as Philadelphia cruised over Toronto after building a three-goal lead. Briere scored Philadelphia's final two goals to give him a team-leading 16 this season. Ville Leino and Chris Pronger put the Flyers ahead 2-0 in the first period. Brian Boucher made 31 saves.

Mikhail Grabovski scored his third goal in three games.

Rangers 5, Senators 3

At Ottawa, Michael Sauer scored his first NHL goal on a power play with 5:19 left to break a tie as the New York Rangers beat Ottawa. The defenseman took a cross-ice pass from Brandon Prust and drove a slap shot past goalie Brian Elliott to

give New York its first lead. Erik Christensen drew the Rangers even for the third time earlier in the period. Brandon Dubinsky scored into an empty net with 51.9 seconds remaining.

Derek Stepan and Ruslan Fedotenko also scored for New York, which replied quickly after each of Ottawa's first two goals. Mike Fisher scored twice, Jason Spezza added a goal for the Senators, who have lost 10 of 13.

Sabres 6, Sharks 3

At Buffalo, New York, Paul Gaustad had two goals and an assist, Thomas Vanek scored twice, and Ryan Miller made 26 saves to help lead Buffalo over San Jose.

Cody McCormick had a goal and two assists, and Jason Pominville also scored for Buffalo, which has won four of six. The Sabres are 14-1 at home against the Sharks.

Rookie center Logan Couture had a goal and assist, and Marc-Edouard Vlasic and Douglas Murray also scored for San Jose.

Blues 4, Blue Jackets 1

At St. Louis, Jaroslav Halak made 27 saves as St. Louis broke out of a deep power-play slump with a season-high three man-advantage goals against Columbus.

The Blues, who entered the game in an 0-for-22 drought, dating to Nov. 20, got advantage goals from Alex Steen, Jay McClement and Vladimir Sobotka.

David Backes had a goal and two assists, and Erik Johnson had two assists as the Blues won their second straight after a five-game skid.

Wild 3, Coyotes 2

At Glendale, Arizona,

Andrew Brunette scored his second goal on a rare power-play conversion as Minnesota ended a five-game losing streak with a victory over Phoenix.

Brunette scored on a one-timer in the first period and added a redirect midway through the third period for Minnesota's second power-play goal in 32 chances. Niklas Backstrom stopped 33 shots to end a four-start losing streak, and Brent Burns added a goal to help the Wild to their first win at Phoenix since 2008.

Phoenix got a goal from Taylor Pyatt with a two-man advantage with just under a minute left, but couldn't generate any more good chances. Pyatt also scored in the first period for the Coyotes, who have lost four of six.

Kings 2, Flames 1

At Los Angeles, Kyle Clifford scored his first NHL goal and Jonathan Quick made 26 saves as Los Angeles hung on late for a victory over Calgary. Anze Kopitar scored a power-play goal for the Kings, who have won three straight after losing seven of eight in a skid that sent them cascading down from the top of the Western Conference standings.

Olli Jokinen broke up Quick's shutout bid on a power-play goal with 3:21 to play, also ending Los Angeles' streak of 45 straight penalty-kills at home from the start of the season.

Mikka Kiprusoff stopped 30 shots for the struggling Flames, who have alternated wins and losses in the past nine games.

In other NHL games it was Boston 5, N.Y. Islanders



Florida Panthers goalie Tomas Vokoun (29), of the Czech Republic, blocks a shot from the Washington Capitals during the first period of an NHL hockey game at the Verizon Center in Washington, on Thursday, Dec. 9, 2010. The Panthers won the game 3-0.

Associated Press

2; Buffalo 6, San Jose 3; 3; St. Louis 4, Columbus 1; Minnesota 3, Phoenix 2; and Los Angeles 2, Calgary 1.□

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NBA Roundup

Garnett's basket gives Celtics 9th straight win

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Kevin Garnett banked in a shot off an alley-oop pass with 1.4 seconds left to give the Boston Celtics their ninth straight victory, 102-101 over the Philadelphia 76ers on Thursday.

After Philadelphia's Andre Iguodala drove for a hook shot with 6.6 seconds left to give Philadelphia a 101-100 lead, Rajon Rondo flipped a long pass to Garnett for the winner. Garnett then raced to midcourt to intercept the 76ers' inbounds pass.

Ray Allen led Eastern Conference-leading Boston with 23 points, Rondo had 19 points and 14 assists, Glen

Davis added 16 points, and Garnett finished with 14. Jodie Meeks led Philadelphia with 19 points, and Lou Williams and Thaddeus Young had 16 each, and Elton Brand added 13 points and 14 rebounds.

Mavericks 102, Nets 89

At Dallas, Dirk Nowitzki had 21 points and 10 rebounds, and Shawn Marion added 18 points as Dallas stretched its winning streak to 11 games, spoiling former Mavericks coach Avery Johnson's return. Johnson, fired by the Mavericks after the 2007-08 season, is in his first season with the Nets.

Jason Terry and Caron Butler added 15 points each, and J.J.

Barea had a career-high 13 assists to help the Mavericks extend the NBA's longest current winning streak.

Brook Lopez led New Jersey with 24 points. The Nets have lost six straight and 11 in a row on the road.

At Portland, Georgia, Andre Miller returned from a one-game suspension to score 22 points as Portland beat Orlando to extend its winning streak to three games.

Miller rejoined the team after sitting out a victory Tuesday over Phoenix because of an NBA-imposed suspension. Miller was disciplined for making "excessive and unnecessary contact" with



Boston Celtics' Kevin Garnett (5) tosses the ball after scoring the go-ahead basket in the second half of an NBA basketball game against the Philadelphia 76ers, Thursday, Dec. 9, 2010, in Philadelphia. Boston won 102-101. Boston's Paul Pierce (34) looks on.

Associated Press

Los Angeles Clippers forward Blake Griffin in a game Sunday. The suspension snapped Miller's consecutive games streak at 632, the longest among active NBA players. He hadn't missed a game since Jan. 24, 2003.

Dwight Howard had a season-high 39 points and added 15 rebounds in the loss, the

Magic's third straight. The team had been hampered by a nasty stomach ailment that hit Howard, Jameer Nelson, J.J. Redick and Mickael Pietrus, but all of them were healthy against the Blazers.

In other Boston 102, Philadelphia 101; Dallas 102, New Jersey 89; Portland 97, Orlando 83. □

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Khan ready for career-defining bout with Maidana

GREG BEACHAM

AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Amir Khan has reached the precipice of serious boxing stardom. Although he just turned 24 on Wednesday, Khan realizes his next few fights are likely to determine whether he joins Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather Jr. among the elite, or turns out to be an overhyped mediocrity.

Khan is eager to find out for himself, because he's got his eye on much more than a few gaudy title belts. He dreams of global domination — Nike commercials, ridiculous wealth and one-name recognition beyond his native England and his ancestral Pakistan, where he's already the biggest thing going.

If Khan (23-1, 17 KOs) can't defend his WBA 140-pound title in his Las Vegas debut against Argentina's Marcos Maidana on Saturday night at the Mandalay Bay Events Center, those dreams will recede into the distance. Khan isn't eager to chase them down again.

"If I want to be the champion I say I am, I have to win fights like this," Khan said. "I have to leave a statement in the States. I want to get people talking about me, to start looking forward to my fights over here. Fighting in Las Vegas, and beating somebody as good as Maidana, is the only way to do that."

Although each fighter accused the other of ducking him in the months leading up to the bout, Khan isn't shying away from the pressure. He's been carrying an awful lot of it on his slim shoulders ever since he won a silver medal at the Athens Olympics, where the boy from Bolton became a darling of the British press and embarked on his well-covered path up the boxing ladder.

Khan has a winning personality, dazzling athletic skill, strong promotional backing and a multicultural appeal that all seem perfectly packaged for the success he seeks. What he doesn't have are victories over his sport's elite — but there are plenty of opportunities in the stacked junior welterweight division starting with Maidana (29-1, 27 KOs), who also aspires to take control of the weight class with his raw punching power.

"It's like a freight truck hitting a Ferrari," Golden Boy promoter Richard Schaefer said.

Khan traveled from Hollywood to the Philippines this fall during four months of training with Pacquiao guru Freddie Roach, who pitted his top two pupils in multiple sparring sessions. Khan has been a near-perfect fighter since upending his camp after his only loss, a stunning first-round knockout by Breidis Prescott in September 2008.

"If that loss hadn't happened, I don't think I'd be here," Khan said.

"I don't think I ever would have sparred with Manny Pacquiao. When everything is going well, you don't think you need to do anything else. I had to lose that fight to rebuild myself and get to where I am now."

After making his U.S. debut last May in a one-sided win over Paulie Malignaggi, Khan landed in boxing's capital city with his most respected opponent to date. He acknowledges hoping to return to England for this fight before making a bigger splash next year, but Maidana's apparent reluctance to fight in Europe put the fight in Las Vegas.

The bout also is a breakthrough for Maidana, whose only



In this Nov. 30, 2010, file photo, British boxer Amir Khan trains during a media workout in Los Angeles. Khan will WBA 140-pound title against Argentina's Marcos Maidana in Las Vegas on Saturday, Dec. 11.

Associated Press

loss was a split decision to Andreas Kotelnik in February 2009. Maidana jumped to the division's forefront last year with a thrilling win over Victor Ortiz, who will fight on their undercard at Mandalay Bay.

While Maidana is thought to lack Khan's speed and skill, his pure power has impressed every opponent — including Ortiz, who knocked down Maidana three times in the first two rounds of their bout before Maidana stopped him in the sixth. If Maidana connects with a big punch, Khan's chin will be tested in a way it hasn't been since his loss.

Maidana also hopes he can finish the year by following up countryman Sergio Martinez's spectacular knockout of Paul Williams with a similar result. While Khan thinks Maidana is better than fellow 140-pound studs Timothy Bradley and Devon Alexander,

Maidana has been much less complimentary toward Khan. Maidana said this week he doesn't consider the matchup to be a difficult fight for him, while trainer Miguel Diaz has labeled Khan "ordinary" and

"average."

Khan knows his reputation will precede him until he backs up the hype with results. In his first appearance on the Vegas stage, he can't wait to perform. □

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At age 23, Crosby has already won a Stanley Cup, the NHL MVP award and a scoring title. He's a cultural icon in Canada, where he was chosen as a national magazine's man of the year for his Olympic gold medal-winning goal. Yet to talk to him, it's almost as if he has so much more to do, so much more to prove.

In a league where blanketing defenses, huge defensemen and excellent goaltending make goal-scoring increasingly difficult, Crosby is accumulating statistics rarely seen since the early 1990s. Crosby has at least one point — and usually a lot more — in 17 consecutive games while leading the Penguins on an 11-game winning streak.

During his own streak, Crosby has 20 goals and 15 assists, or more points than all but two NHL players have all season. He has four multiple-goal games in his last six alone, and is on pace for 71 goals and 136 points in an era when 100-point scorers are increasingly rare. After scoring twice on Wednesday against Toronto, Crosby needs 24 over his next 20 contests to become only the sixth player with 50

goals in his team's first 50 games. Brett Hull, in 1992, was the last player to reach that.

"Honestly, I think it's pretty farfetched for that to happen," Crosby said of 50 in 50. "Maybe someday, somebody will do it and, if they do, it's unbelievable. It's pretty easy not to think about it because I don't see it happening."

It was difficult for anyone to see the second-longest winning streak in Penguins' history occurring, especially as they began the season winning only six of their first 14 games. But since Crosby began simulating Lemieux, the Penguins have won 14 of 17.

Coach Dan Bylsma said Crosby was doing it without any slippage in his increasingly diverse game. Crosby, for example, wasn't strong on faceoffs when he came into the league at age 18 in 2005. Yet, he's now the league leader in faceoffs won.

"He's making a lot of special plays and it seems to be every night," Bylsma said. "I think the unique part about this situation right now is the consistency at which he's there. His highlight reel



Pittsburgh Penguins' Sidney Crosby shoots for his second goal of the NHL hockey game, in the second period against the Toronto Maple Leafs, Wednesday, Dec. 8, 2010, in Pittsburgh.

Associated Press

is long, but the consistency with which he's playing, there's no cheat, there's no holes, there's no 'on his own page.' It's within the structure of our team and how we want to play."

There's almost no privacy, either.

Crosby is being dogged daily by an HBO crew taping his every move for a series of specials leading up to the Winter Classic against Washington and co-star Alex Ovechkin on Jan. 1. While he

values his privacy and guards his image, Crosby doesn't seem overly concerned the shows might reveal that his on-ice vocabulary contains curse words. For now, though, he's drawing the line at being taped inside his home.

Like Guerin, Tampa Bay Lightning general manager Steve Yzerman won't need to watch the shows to know what he's seeing.

At the NHL board of governors meetings this

week, Yzerman said Crosby was the best possible role model for young players because he blocks shots, wins faceoffs and create goals with his passing, not just with his shooting. It's the kind of multitasking few superstar-level players are willing to do.

Even after the Penguins won the Stanley Cup in 2009, Crosby spent that summer working on his shooting, and his goal production jumped from 33 that season to 51 in 2009-10. This season, he has 26 goals and 50 points in only 30 games.

The Penguins have built their winning streak despite minimal contributions from the injured Evgeni Malkin (knee), who has one goal since Nov. 13, and none from forward Jordan Staal (foot, hand), who hasn't played this season.

"Imagine how things are going to roll when those two come back," forward Pascal Dupuis said.

Imagine if Crosby keeps scoring like this.



Tennis great Martina Navratilova celebrates after scoring a goal during a demonstration at a soccer game in Nairobi, Kenya on Saturday, Dec. 4, 2010. Navratilova next week will climb Tanzania's Mount Kilimanjaro to raise money and awareness for the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation.

Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Martina Navratilova has been hospitalized in Kenya with an accumulation of fluid in the lungs after attempting to climb Africa's highest peak, according to a statement released Friday evening.

The 54-year-old tennis great has been diagnosed with high-altitude pulmonary edema, said Dr. David Silverstein, a consultant in cardiology and internal medicine at Nairobi Hospital.

"It is potentially dangerous when someone is at high altitude,

Navratilova hospitalized after Kilimanjaro attempt

but once brought down, recovery is quick," he said. "Martina is doing well and will continue to do well."

Navratilova had been assisted down Mount Kilimanjaro by porters and driven to the Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre for assessment after having to abandon her attempt to climb the mountain in Tanzania for a sport charity.

The 27-person climbing team Navratilova was part of has faced heavy snows and mist since beginning the climb up the 19,340-foot mountain Monday.

"I'm disappointed not to be able to complete this amazing journey," she said in the statement. "It was something that I have wanted to do for so long but it was not to be."

Navratilova, who won 18 singles Grand Slams, told The Associated Press last weekend that she has never climbed higher than 12,000 feet. She had reached nearly 14,800 feet when she was forced to give up after feeling unwell, according to the charity.

The Aspen, Colorado resident told AP she was "petrified" of failing to reach the summit "because then the whole world will know."

Navratilova was climbing the mountain to raise money and awareness for the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation. The rest of the team will continue the climb and should reach the summit Saturday. □

Aruba TODAY

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Spam download surge among WikiLeaks supporters

By RAPHAEL G. SATTER,
Associated Press

LONDON — WikiLeaks supporters on Friday downloaded increasing amounts of the spam-shooting software used to attack companies seen as hostile — a development that could challenge even Internet giants such as PayPal and Amazon.com during the crucial Christmas shopping season. U.S. data security company Imperva says downloads of the attack program used to bombard websites with bogus requests for data have jumped to over 40,000, with thousands of new downloads reported overnight.

"It's definitely increasing," Imperva Web researcher Tal Be'ery said in a telephone interview from Israel.

The freely available software is a critical part of the campaign by "hacktivists" seeking to take revenge on sites they believe have betrayed WikiLeaks, the group that has outraged American officials by publishing hundreds of thousands of classified U.S. diplomatic cables and military intelligence reports.

Users who download the software essentially volunteer their computers to be used as weapons that volley

streams of electronic spam at targeted websites. The more computers, the greater the flow of data requests, and the better chances are of overwhelming the targeted website.

The cyberguerillas, who gather under the name Anonymous, have generally been successful in foiling their enemies. Attacks directed at the main pages of Visa Inc. and MasterCard Inc. succeeded in making them inaccessible, in MasterCard's case for several hours. Attacks on online payment company PayPal Inc. have periodically rendered part of its website inoperative. Moneybookers.com, another targeted site, was inaccessible Friday.

All four sites have severed their links to WikiLeaks, often citing suspected "terms of use" violations, hurting the group's ability to accept donations. The moves angered WikiLeaks supporters and alarmed free speech advocates, whom claim the companies are caving in to U.S. pressure to muzzle the controversial website.

WikiLeaks has been careful to distance itself from Anonymous, saying "we neither condemn nor applaud these attacks."

A press release circulated

under the Anonymous name Friday said the group was acting "to raise awareness about WikiLeaks and the underhanded methods employed by the above companies to impair WikiLeaks' ability to function."

Imperva said Friday that it had monitored Anonymous supporters boasting about bringing in huge numbers of extra computers to back the attacks — something it said might challenge Amazon.com — another site that cut its ties to WikiLeaks — at one of the retailer's busiest times of the year. But Be'ery stressed the boasts were unconfirmed, and the Anonymous statement said its members did not want to alienate the public by causing online havoc over the holidays. "Simply put, attacking a major online retailer when people are buying presents for their loved ones would be in bad taste," the Anonymous release said. Dutch police said Friday they were investigating whether hackers were responsible for taking



A protestor wears tape over his mouth as supporters of WikiLeaks and its founder Julian Assange gather in Sydney, Friday, Dec. 10, 2010. WikiLeaks' extensive releases of secret U.S. diplomatic cables have embarrassed U.S. allies, angered rivals, and reopened old wounds across the world. U.S. officials in Washington say other countries have curtailed their dealings with the U.S. government because of WikiLeaks' actions.

(AP Photo/Rick Rycroft)

down the websites of police and prosecutors in the Netherlands after the arrest of a 16-year-old suspected cybercriminal and alleged WikiLeaks supporter. In Australia, WikiLeaks supporters held rallies Friday in Brisbane and in Sydney, where more than 500 people gathered outside Town Hall, some waving signs that read, "Hands off WikiLeaks, We deserve the truth," and "Don't shoot the messenger."

One man sealed his mouth shut with tape on which the words "NO LEAKS" was written. Among the most recent newsworthy WikiLeaks revelations was a claim that drug maker Pfizer Inc. hired investigators to dig up dirt on Nigeria's former attorney general in a bid to stop action over a 1996 drug study, and that the U.S. considered taking military action against an arms-laden Ukrainian ship after

300,000 Android Phones Now Activated Each Day

announcing that Apple was then "activating a little over 230,000 iOS devices per day -- and that's new activations." He added, "We think some of our friends are counting upgrades in their numbers. If we counted upgrades in our numbers, they would be way higher than 230,000."

In response, Google told media outlets that it only counts the number of Android devices that become activated for Google services each day. As a result, the company said, the figures it reports only represent a portion of the total number of new Android-based devices entering the global marketplace on a daily basis.

The iPad Factor
Google's latest Android activation count is primarily for smartphones, whereas

Apple figures always include a significant number of non-smartphone devices such as the iPad and the iPod touch. Based on Apple's report of 4.19 million iPads sold in the company's latest business quarter, for example, the iPad alone could account for as many as 46,000 iOS activations per day.

The iPad and iPod touch "contribute to the strength of Apple's ecosystem and the iPhone in a way that smartphone-only manufacturers cannot compete with," noted Gartner Research Vice President Carolina Milanesi. "While Android is increasingly available on media tablets and media players like the Galaxy (Tab), it lags far behind iOS's multi-device presence."



This handout image released by Samsung Electronics in Seoul shows views of the Nexus S. More than 300,000 smartphones running on Google-backed Android software are activated daily, according to an engineering vice president at the Internet giant.

Mark Long

The number of Android devices Google is activating each day has grown 500 percent since January, when the company reported 60,000 activations per day. In a tweet late Wednesday, Google Vice President of

Engineering Andy Rubin said "over 300,000 Android phones" are being activated each day on average.

In September, Apple CEO Steve Jobs sought to downplay Google's August report of 200,000 daily Android activations by

On the other hand, Apple's daily numbers have also risen since September. According to a November Gartner report, Apple by then had boosted its internal iOS activations to 275,000 devices per day on average. Still, Google may further fuel its momentum through the U.S. launch next week of Samsung's Nexus S smartphone running Android 2.3 -- the latest edition of the Android OS also known as Gingerbread.

The advanced smartphone -- which integrates a one-gigahertz Hummingbird processor paired with a dedicated graphics-processing unit for gaming -- also will ship unlocked, which means it will run on any GSM network right out of the box. □

Collaborators say new MJ album honors legacy



In this CD cover image released by Epic Records, newly completed recordings from Michael Jackson entitled 'Michael,' is shown. The CD will be released on Dec. 14....

By NEKESA MUMBI MOODY,
AP Music Writer

NEW YORK — Michael Jackson spent the last two years of his life plotting his musical comeback. Besides a spectacular, record-breaking concert series planned for London, he was also tapping the hottest producers and biggest names for an album he hoped would help restore the luster to his spectacular yet troubled career.

"He wanted to give the world a gift. He didn't want the world to depend on 'Thriller,' or 'Bad' or 'Off the Wall,'" said Theron "Neff-U" Feemster, one of the last producers to work with Jackson. "He wanted to give them something new and fresh, and something they could hold and remember forever."

Jackson didn't live to see his dream come to fruition, but with help from Feemster, the singer's estate and several other collaborators, another Jackson album has been crafted for his fans.

"Michael," to be released Tuesday, contains 10 songs, most of which Jackson was working on when he died in June 2009 at age 50. The tracks were at different stages of completion, but producers like longtime Jackson collaborator Teddy Riley, Grammy-winner Tricky Stewart and rocker Lenny Kravitz worked

(AP Photo/Epic Records) over the last year to put the finishing touches on an album they believe Jackson would have been proud to call his own.

"I know he stood behind it, so I'm cool with what I did," said Kravitz. "I was proud to put it out and knew that he'd be all over it, that he'd be really with it."

Yet some are questioning whether "Michael" should be considered a true Jackson album since the King of Pop — a notoriously meticulous creator who labored over his creations until he thought they were as perfect as they could be — never put his stamp of approval on it.

Earlier this year, the Black Eyed Peas' will.i.am, who had done some work with Jackson before he died, harshly rebuked the planned posthumous release in an interview with The Associated Press, saying: "Now that he is not part of the process, what are they doing? Why would you put a record out like that? Because he was a friend of mine, I just think that's disrespectful."

That's not the only criticism of the project. When the single "Breaking News" was previewed for fans on michaeljackson.com, his three nephews publicly assailed the song, a condemnation of the media, and said the voice featured on the track

wasn't Jackson's. This led Riley, former manager Frank Dileo and others to come out and vouch for the track's authenticity.

"I don't think that it's fair for anyone to say it without any proof. You have no proof," said Riley in a recent interview, adding that the producers "took it to the next level" and hired three forensic musicologists in defense of the album.

Sony Records, which is releasing "Michael," also got the backing of other Jackson collaborators to prove that it is Jackson.

John Branca, who was Jackson's lawyer for years and is co-executor of his estate, would not specifically address the veracity of Jackson's vocals, saying the facts speak for themselves.

But as far as whether Jackson would have approved of the release of the songs, Branca, while calling Jackson a "perfectionist," compared the upcoming album to that of last year's "This Is It."

That film was based on rehearsals for Jackson's sold-out comeback shows at London's O2 arena that were never to be. With careful editing, a dazzling — if unfinished — portrait of Jackson emerged.

"If you remember, there was criticism about the movie 'This Is It' because it contained rehearsal footage," said Branca. "Some said Michael would not have wanted to release it. But people loved it and it expanded people's love for him."

"Michael," a mixture of soulful pop ballads and up-

tempo, mechanical-sounding grooves that recall his "Dangerous" era, is a much more polished artistic project than "This Is It," party due to the top names brought in by the estate to finish Jackson's creative vision.

Stewart, who has worked with such top talent as Beyoncé and Rihanna, never collaborated with Jackson but was asked to work on the ballad "Keep Your Head Up," which Jackson co-wrote. Stewart said the process was a bit intimidating at first. "It was a tremendous amount of pressure because Michael was one of the great record-makers in the history of music," said Stewart. "Not only are you trying to make sure that you're keeping the integrity of the record, but you're also trying to love up the body of work." □

Upstate NY town pays tribute to 'Wonderful Life'

By BEN DOBBIN,
Associated Press

SENECA FALLS, N.Y. — For years, civic boosters have pointed out intriguing parallels that suggest Seneca Falls was the inspiration for Bedford Falls, the make-believe New York mill town in "It's a Wonderful Life."

Those musings are now embodied in a museum of sorts that showcases Frank Capra's Christmas movie classic. And who cut the ribbon at Friday's grand opening? Zuzu, of course. Former child actress Karolyn Grimes, who played George Bailey's daughter Zuzu in the 1946 drama, traveled to central New York to launch "The Seneca Falls It's a Wonderful Life Museum."

Grimes called the exhibition of movie posters, photographs, magazine covers and memorabilia "a great leap of faith ... in a wonderful place that's just so much like Bedford Falls."



FILE - In this Dec. 8, 2006 file photo, Karolyn Grimes who played 'Zuzu' in the movie 'It's a Wonderful Life' poses for a photo in Seneca Falls, N.Y. For years, civic boosters have pointed out intriguing parallels that suggest Seneca Falls was the inspiration for Bedford Falls, the make-believe mill town in 'It's a Wonderful Life.'

Capra once said, he strove "to champion man, plead his causes and protest any degradation of his dignity, spirit and divinity."

Those quotations from the late director line the walls of the one-room display at the Center for the Voices of Humanity run by Anwei and Henry Law at the former Seneca Theater. The couple hopes the exhibition, which is open free of charge on weekdays, will in time become an officially designated museum.

A big part of the film's enduring appeal is its joyous closing

(AP Photo/David Duprey, File) scenes in which townspeople rally behind Jimmy Stewart's character, a downcast small-town money lender who comes to his senses with help from Clarence Odbody, a guardian angel. "Maybe we like it (the film) because we know what the ending's going to be — in our lives, we don't," Anwei Law said. "No matter what's going on, George Bailey is going to be that richest man in town because he's spent his life enriching others and just being who he is, that person who is there for everybody." □

BUSINESS**Aruba TODAY**

Stocks edge higher on encouraging economic signs

By MATTHEW CRAFT,

AP Business Writer

NEW YORK – Brightening prospects for passage of a compromise tax package and an encouraging trade report has stocks edging higher.

The government reported Friday morning that the U.S. trade deficit fell to its lowest level in nine months in October. Growing demand for American goods overseas pushed exports to their highest level in more than two years. The trade deficit narrowed to \$38.7 billion, 13.2 percent below September's deficit of \$44.6 billion.

In afternoon trading, the Dow Jones industrial average rose 13, or 0.1 percent, to 11,382.62. The Standard & Poor's 500 index rose 3.5, or 0.3 percent, to 1,236.50. The Nasdaq composite index rose 10, or 0.4 percent, to 2,626.74.

It appeared that the Senate

would approve legislation aimed at avoiding sweeping tax increases Jan. 1 after negotiators added a few sweeteners to promote ethanol and other forms of alternative energy.

A test vote was set for Monday.

House Democrats, however, balked at the proposal to extend tax cuts, voting in a closed-door meeting Thursday not to allow the package to reach the floor for a vote without changes to scale back tax cuts for the rich.

Tom di Galoma, head of fixed income trading at Guggenheim Partners in New York, said traders see passage of the deal as nearly inevitable. Their view is that it's unthinkable that Democrats would ultimately prevent the measure from going through. "To stimulate the economy, it really has to be done," he said. "The last thing you want to do is



FILE - In this file photo taken Dec. 7, 2010, specialist Patrick Murphy, foreground left, directs trading in shares of Citigroup at the close of trading on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange.

(AP Photo/Richard Drew, file)

raise taxes in the middle of a recession."

On the off chance it failed, di Galoma said, stocks would probably lose the gains made over the past two weeks. Treasurys would jump, causing their yields to plummet.

Markets were trading flat

in Europe and Asia, with concerns China's decision to tighten bank lending could dampen global growth.

Of the 30 stocks in the Dow index, 16 rose, led by General Electric Co. GE rose 1.6 percent to \$17.41.

Healthcare stocks are

leading the S&P 500 index higher. Shares in Tenet Healthcare Corp. rose 54 percent to \$6.60. Hospital operator Community Health has offered to buy Tenet for \$3 billion in cash and stock. The merger would create the country's second-largest hospital chain. □

Stock sales help government offset bailout losses

By MARTIN CRUTSINGER,

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON – Stock sales are helping the government offset projected losses from its \$700 billion rescue of the financial system.

The Treasury Department has brought in \$35 billion in revenue over two years, boosted by ongoing sales of Citigroup stock, new data show. But the Congressional Budget Office projects taxpayers will still lose \$25 billion for bailing out the financial sector and U.S. automakers.

The new total for revenue generated by the Troubled Asset Relief Program is up from the nearly \$30 billion in income shown in the previous report covering the program's finances

through October. Much of the additional income came from the sale of Citigroup common stock. The Treasury sold off the last of its stake in the banking giant Tuesday, ending up with receipts of \$12 billion above the government's investment of \$45 billion.

Smaller amounts of income in November came from dividend payments from other banks that received support from the bailout fund, and also from dividends from the support provided to the former financing arm of General Motors. The estimates of the government's total losses from the program have been declining. The CBO's estimate of \$25 billion in losses were made in a report in November. That's down from August, when the CBO projected the

government would lose \$66 billion, and March, when the forecast for losses was \$109 billion. The CBO said the lower estimates resulted from two factors. One is the continued repurchases of preferred stock by banks that received the bailout funds. The other is a lower estimated cost for assistance to insurance giant American International Group and Chrysler and GM.

TARP was developed by the previous Bush administration and passed by Congress at the height of the financial crisis in October 2008. It became widely unpopular with the public. Republicans used voter unhappiness with the bailout and soaring federal budget deficits to help pick up six Senate seats in the November elections and take control of the House. □

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FILE - In this Jan. 25, 2009 file photo, the Pfizer logo is displayed at world headquarters in New York. Pfizer Inc. said Friday, Dec. 10, 2010, it is pulling its blood pressure drug Thelin off the market and stopping all clinical trials because the drug can cause fatal liver damage.

(AP Photo/Mark Lennihan, file)

Citing liver damage, Pfizer withdraws Thelin

By MARLEY SEAMAN,
AP Health Writer

NEW YORK — Pfizer Inc. said Friday it is pulling its blood pressure drug Thelin off the market and stopping all clinical trials because the drug can cause fatal liver damage.

Thelin is sold in the European Union, Canada, and Australia as an oral treatment for severe pulmonary arterial hypertension, or high blood pressure in the pulmonary artery. Pfizer said two patients who were taking Thelin died during a clinical trial, and a review of data from clinical studies and post-marketing reports showed a new link to liver injury.

Liver damage was a known side effect of Thelin and similar drugs, the company said, but the review uncovered a link to liver damage that was not tied to identifiable risk factors. It said the problem was unlikely to be detected by routine monitoring, and in some cases, the problems did not go away after patients stopped taking Thelin.

Pfizer said the withdrawal was voluntary and added that it has withdrawn its filing for marketing approval in the U.S. Since there are other treatment options, Pfizer said the benefits of Thelin don't outweigh the risks. It is stopping all studies of the drug, which Pfizer acquired in 2008 when it bought Encysive Pharmaceuticals Inc. Encysive had been trying to win marketing approval for Thelin since 2005, but the Food and Drug Administration said it was not effective enough. Other agencies only approved the drug for hypertension that was so debilitating that patients' physical activity was severely limited. The New York company said worldwide sales of Thelin, or sitaxsentan, totaled \$44.4 million in the first nine months of 2010.

In afternoon trading, shares of Pfizer added 12 cents to \$16.88. □

Drug combo helps women with early breast cancer

By MARILYNN MARCHIONE,
AP Medical Writer

SAN ANTONIO — New drug combinations are helping women with early breast cancer. Using two drugs that more precisely target tumors doubled the number of women whose cancer disappeared compared to those who had only one of the drugs, doctors reported Friday. It was the first test of Herceptin and Tykerb together for early-stage disease. They aim at a protein called HER-2 that is overproduced in about one-fourth of all breast cancers. Herceptin blocks the protein on the cell's surface; Tykerb does it inside the cell.

Dr. Jose Baselga, associate director of the Massachusetts General Hospital Cancer Center, led a study when he previously worked in Barcelona, Spain, that tested these drugs alone and in combination in 455 patients who also were given the chemotherapy drug paclitaxel. The patients were treated for about four months before surgery to remove their tumors and for nine months afterward. Doctors have been testing drugs in advance of surgery to shrink tumors and make the operation less drastic, and to get an idea quickly if these drugs will help a patient.

Just over half of the women who received Herceptin and Tykerb were discovered to have

no signs of invasive cancer when their surgeries were done, versus only 25 to 30 percent of those given just one of these drugs.

Tykerb had more side effects, mostly diarrhea. But the main side effect of combo treatment is to the wallet: Tykerb pills cost \$5,000 to \$6,000 per month. Herceptin costs more than \$4,000 a month plus whatever doctors charge to infuse it. "The possibility that we have here is to enhance the number of patients that are cured" and avoid more treatment down the line that might cost more, Baselga said.

However, Dr. Neil Spector of the Duke Cancer Institute said cost "is a real consideration." Yet he called the results "really exciting" and said the future of cancer care is approaches like this that use targeted drugs well matched to patients' tumor profiles.

British-based GlaxoSmithKline PLC makes Tykerb; California-based Genentech, now part of the Swiss company Roche, makes Herceptin. A second study in Germany pitted the two drugs against each other in 600 women with early breast cancer also getting standard chemotherapy for six months before surgery. Herceptin won: 31 percent saw their tumors disappear versus 22 percent on Tykerb.

The studies were reported Friday at the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium. □

Broccoli may not fight lung cancer in non-smokers

NEW YORK — Some studies have hinted that eating your broccoli might help prevent lung cancer. But a new study of non-smoking women finds no strong link between compounds found in cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli and lower risk of lung cancer.

The study, of nearly 1,000 non-smoking Chinese women with and without lung cancer, found no overall association between the women's risk of the cancer and their urinary levels of isothiocyanates -- compounds in cruciferous vegetables thought to have anti-cancer properties.

The results, reported in the

journal Lung Cancer, conflict with those of some previous studies finding that among smokers and non-smokers alike, people who eat more cruciferous vegetables tend to have a lower lung cancer risk than those who shun the vegetables. However, those studies do not prove that the vegetables -- which include broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, cabbage and turnips -- are themselves protective.

In addition, some research has suggested that if the veggies do offer a benefit, it may vary according to people's genetic make-up. Specifically, studies have implicated variations in

certain genes that govern the activity of GST enzymes, which, among other jobs, help regulate isothiocyanate levels in the body.

Isothiocyanates, or ITCs, trigger an increase in antioxidant enzymes that help counter cell damage and inflammation brought on by oxidative stress -- from sources like air pollution and tobacco smoke. Because cruciferous vegetables are the main dietary source of ITCs, researchers have speculated that the compounds may explain the connection between high consumption of the vegetables and lower lung cancer risk. □



Scientists Use Earth for Clues Into History of Mars

Charles Q. Choi

There is no place on Earth that is a perfect copycat of Mars as it is now, or as it was at any specific point in the past. But scientists suggest Earth has little versions of Mars as it might have been over decades.

These places could help scientists develop a timeline of the Red Planet's history. By providing insights on how Mars has changed over time, these terrestrial mimics could help us better understand the results of past and current missions to Mars. They also could help researchers plan future expeditions to look for signs of life on Mars. In addition, investigating these extreme sites on Earth could shed light on the limits of life.

Astrobiologist Alberto Fairen at the SETI Institute and NASA Ames Research Center and his colleagues identified three stages Mars went through.

In the first, cold, wet age, enough liquid water and energy was present to make Mars potentially habitable. In the second "Snowball Mars" age, conditions became extremely challenging, and the liquid water that could have made life possible became scarce.

In the current hyper-arid age, conditions on the surface have become largely uninhabitable, save perhaps some isolated niches.

"We have tried to assign every analog to a specific time in Mars' geological history, so we can study the evolution of Mars in Earth environments," Fairen explained. "This will be the only way to ask ourselves the right questions." Their research was detailed in the November issue of the journal Astrobiology.

First age of Mars — Cold and wet

The first 700 million to 900 million years of the Red Planet are what the researchers dub the first age of Mars. Back then, although temperatures overall were cold, it appears liquid water was probably abundant on the surface. The planet also possessed a thicker atmosphere and a global magnetic field that could have protected against hostile radiation, helping provide the most hospitable conditions for life as we know it in the entire history of Mars. [Videos: What Went Wrong on Mars?]

Most of the water-linked features and mineral deposits seen to date on Mars

stem from this first age. The largest part of the surface was composed of volcanic rocks and related soils, which the surface waters reacted with to generate a variety of minerals. These include phyllosilicates, which are typical products of the weathering of volcanic basalt, and evaporites, deposits that form after the upwelling and evaporation of groundwater.

Four sites on Earth mimic rocks from this age on Mars. They could yield insights not only into the chemistry that dominated the surface of the Red Planet back then, but also into the potential for both life and the preservation of traces of life. The North Pole Dome area, which covers some 230 square miles (600 square km) in the 3.5-billion-year-old Pilbara region of Western Australia, is an excellent analog for Martian phyllosilicate formation, the researchers noted. It also contains evidence of Earth's earliest biosphere in the form of stromatolites and possible microfossils more than 3 billion years old, and therefore could shed light on how any Martian fossils might have been preserved or degraded over time.

Continued on Next Page



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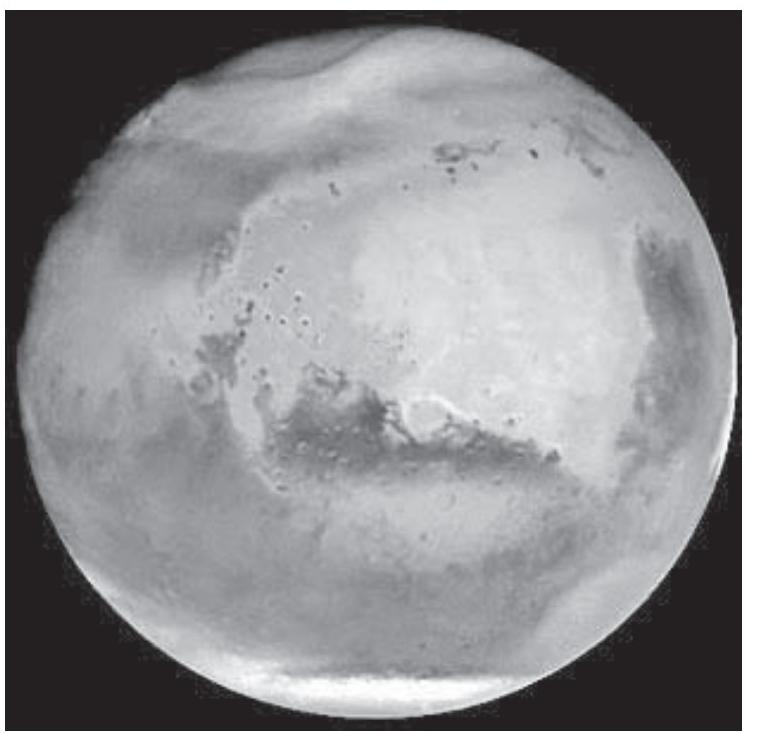
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**HISTORY OF MARS***Continued from previous Page*

When it comes to evaporites, acidic environments on Earth could serve as compelling analogs for acid sulfate-rich regions such as Meridiani Planum on Mars, including seasonally dry, acid lakes in Western Australia, the Rio Tinto basin in Spain and cold acid drainage systems in the Canadian Arctic.

These acidic environments on Earth are either rich in microbes or possess evidence of microbial activity, and as such could shed light on Meridiani Planum, which is considered a prime target for the search for any organic material that life could potentially have left on Mars.

Second age of Mars — Snowball Mars

As Mars became increasingly dry and cold some 3 billion to 3.6 billion years ago, its

water froze, leaving its surface nearly or entirely frozen. The disappearance of the planet's magnetic field and the surface's increasing cold and aridity probably made it dramatically less habitable overall.

Still, there was massive volcanism, leading to episodic inundations of large parts of the lowlands, which might have provided favorable conditions for the preservation and evolution of life. The prevailing conditions on the surface then were probably similar to ones seen at polar regions on Earth, including large ice sheets and glaciers. Astrobiologists looking for lessons on Mars are especially interested in how microbes and signs of life on Earth are preserved for long spans of time in ice, and how microorganisms deal with the rigors of arctic conditions and impact their environment.

Ice and permafrost on Earth are known to hold a large number of viable microbes up to 8 million years old, with permafrost bacteria showing measurable activity down to at least minus 4 degrees F (minus 20 degrees C), and that survival could even extend to at least minus 40 degrees F (minus 40 degrees C).

Three analogs on Earth for "Snowball Mars" include Axel Heiberg Island in the extreme northern regions of the Canadian High Arctic, Beacon Valley in Antarctica, and the North Greenland Eemian Ice Drilling Project site.

The permafrost at Axel Heiberg island is analogous to Martian permafrost; Greenland is a good analog to the martian north polar layered deposits, exhibiting similar patterns when it comes to accumulations of material, and the up to 10-million-year-old ice of Beacon Valley might be the oldest known ice on Earth, and as such could shed light on anything preserved for long times on Mars.

Third age of Mars — Hyperarid Mars

The last age of Mars that has persisted for the past 3 billion years has seen an extremely dry and cold Red Planet with a surface bathed by hostile solar ultraviolet radiation. The cold, coupled with an extraordinarily thin atmosphere, means that liquid water cannot survive long on the surface, which is probably the most serious constraint for life there. [Most Amazing

Mars Rover Discoveries]

Although there are no places on Earth today akin to the arid and cold conditions seen on Mars today, there are two areas where liquid water is extremely fleeting. In the Atacama Desert in Chile, the heat makes water vaporize, while in University Valley in Antarctica, the water freezes.

In the Atacama Desert the soils are very old, up to 2 million years in age, as well as extremely dry and enriched in soluble salts similar to those found on Mars. The soils also possess very low levels of bacteria and organic materials, providing a way to study the rigors any Martian microbes might face.

Another way the soils in the Atacama Desert mimic Martian ones lies in how they possess levels of perchlorates nearly as high as those seen by the Phoenix lander on Mars. These were likely created by sunlight-induced chemical reactions in the atmosphere.

A contentious past

There have been decades of debate over how warm, cold, wet or dry Mars has been in the past, and not everyone agrees with the timeline that Fairen and his colleagues set forth.

For instance, during the earliest age of Mars, which Fairen and his colleagues set forward as cold and wet, "I don't think you can create the kinds of features that they see without a much warmer climate than they propose," said planetary scientist James Kasting at Pennsylvania

State University, who did not participate in this study. "I don't believe in a cold, wet Mars — I think it was warm and wet in the distant past, and I think climate models for Mars bear that out. That doesn't mean that it was as warm as the Earth is today, but that mean annual temperatures were above the freezing point of water."

Fairen noted that it was "difficult is to know if the planet was warm or cold. Atmospheric models are unable to raise the temperatures on the surface over zero degrees C (the freezing point of water) whatever the concentration of carbon dioxide assumed, so additional gases must have contributed to warm early Mars.

Which gases did this, and what their concentrations were, is something that still needs to be determined, so the 'warm' model for early Mars lacks solid evidence. Alternatively, salty solutions could have kept liquid on Mars at temperatures somewhat under the freezing point of pure water, for a cold and wet Mars."

Regardless of the arguments over how warm or wet Mars was in the past, planetary scientist Victor Baker at the University of Arizona, who did not take part on this study, felt the timeline would help motivate research. "It can help us understand particular periods in Martian history and formulate strategies on where to go and search for life," he said.

"They're presenting the idea that we have to think of Mars as a whole planet evolving through time, and as something that we can look at on Earth."

"If people don't like the timeline, that's a positive thing, too — they can go out and find hard data that the timeline is wrong, and then create a better one, and then science can move forward," Baker added. "This framework they propose is not absolute — it's a working idea. They're not saying this is absolutely the way Mars is, but that this is a way we can think of it as a strategy to learn more about the planet, and it's something we can revise as we move along." □

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Muere líder del cártel mexicano "La Familia"

APATZINGAN, México (Reuters) - El líder del violento cártel mexicano "La Familia", Nazario "El Chayo" Moreno, fue abatido a tiros por fuerzas federales en el occidente del país, dijo el viernes el Gobierno, en un nuevo golpe contra líderes del narcotráfico.

Moreno, por quien las autoridades mexicanas ofrecían una recompensa de 2.4 millones de dólares, murió el jueves en medio de choques que duraron horas entre sicarios del cártel y policías federales que se iniciaron en los alrededores de la localidad de Apatzingán, en el centro del estado de Michoacán.

"Diversos elementos de información obtenidos durante el operativo coinciden en señalar en que el día de ayer cayó abatido Nazario Moreno González, también conocido como 'El Chayo' o 'El Doctor', dijo

en un mensaje a la prensa el portavoz de Seguridad Nacional, Alejandro Poiré. Moreno, de 40 años y sobre el que había una orden de arresto girada por un tribunal en Texas por introducir 5 toneladas de marihuana a Estados Unidos, es el sexto capo narco que cae en el último año. En diciembre del 2009 murió el jefe del cártel de los Beltrán Leyva y meses después Ignacio "Nacho" Coronel, del cártel de Sinaloa.

Más tarde fue capturado Edgar "La Barbie" Villarreal y su antiguo socio Sergio "el Grande" Villarreal.

Hace semanas murió en un enfrentamiento Antonio Ezequiel "Tony Tormenta" Cárdenas, uno de los cabecillas del cártel del Golfo, que opera en el norte del país.

La Familia, dedicado también a la extorsión y al secuestro en estados vecinos,



Un par de policías federales de guardia durante una redada en Apatzingán, México, dic 10 2010.
REUTERS/Leogivildo Gonzalez

es un cártel con tintes de secta religiosa que opera sobre todo en ese estado, dedicado principalmente a la producción

de drogas sintéticas dirigidas al mercado estadounidense. Algunos miembros del cártel, cuyo principal punto

de operación es Michoacán, también están involucrados en la venta ilegal de mineral de fierro a empresas exportadoras.




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